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THE

MONKS OF THE WEST

FROM ST. BENEDICT TO ST. BERNARD

BY THE

COUNT DE MONTALEMBERT

MEMBER OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE

REV. F. A. GASQUET, D.D., O.S.B.

AUTHOR OF

"HENRY VIII. AND THE ENGLISH MONASTERIES"

FIDE ET VERITATE

IN SIX VOLUMES

VOLUME THE THIRD

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BOOK IX

ST. COLUMBA, THE APOSTLE OF CALEDONIA, 521–597

I send thee unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified.—ACTS xxvi. 18.

CHAPTER I

THE YOUTH OF COLUMBA AND HIS MONASTIC LIFE IN IRELAND

The biographers of Columba.—His different names.—His royal origin.—The supreme kings of Ireland: the O'Neills and O'Donnells; Red Hugh.—Birth of Columba; vision of his mother.—His monastic education; jealousy of his comrades; Kieran; the two Finnians; the school of Clonard.—Vision of the guardian angel and the three brides.—The assassin of a virgin struck by death at the prayer of Columba.—His youthful influence in Ireland; his monastic foundations, especially at Durrow and at Derry; his song in honour of Derry.—His love for poetry; his connection with the travelling bards.—He was himself a poet, a great traveller, and of a quarrelsome disposition.—His passion for manuscripts.—Longarad of the hairy legs and his bag of books.—Dispute about the Psalter of Finnian; judgment of King Diarmid, founder of Clonmacnoise.—Protest of Columba; he takes to flight, chanting the *Hymn of Confidence*, and raises a civil war.—Battle of Cul-Dreimhne; the *Cathae* or Psalter of battle.—Synod of Teltown; Columba is excommunicated.—St. Brendan takes part with Columba, who consults several hermits, and among others Abban, in the Cell of Tears.—The last of his advisers, Molaise, condemns him to exile.—Twelve of his disciples follow him; devotion of the young Mochonna.—Contradictory reports concerning the first forty years of his life.

St. Columba, the apostle and monastic hero of Caledonia, has had the good fortune to have his history written by another monk, almost a contemporary of his own, whose biography of him is as delightful as it is edifying. This biographer, Adamnan, was the ninth successor of Columba as abbot of his principal establishment at Iona, and in addition was related to him. Born only a quarter of a century later, he had seen in his childhood the actual companions of Columba and those who had received his last breath.[1] He

[1] "Ut ab aliquibus, qui præsentes inerant, didicimus."—Adamnan, lib. iii. c. 23.

wrote at the very fountainhead, on the spot where his glorious predecessor had dictated his last words, surrounded by scenes and recollections which still bore the trace of his presence, or were connected with the incidents of his life. A still earlier narrative, written by another abbot of Iona,[1] and reproduced almost word for word by Adamnan, forms the basis of his work, which he has completed by a multitude of anecdotes and testimonies collected with scrupulous care, and which altogether, though unfortunately without chronological order, forms one of the most living, attractive, and authentic relics of Christian history.[2]

Like twenty other saints of the Irish calendar, Columba bore a symbolical name borrowed from the Latin, a name which signified the dove of the Holy Ghost, and which was soon to be rendered illustrious by his countryman Columbanus, the celebrated founder of Luxeuil, with whom many modern historians have confounded him.[3] To distinguish the one from the other, and to indicate specially the greatest Celtic

[1] By Comyn the Fair (*Cummeneus Albus*), the seventh bishop of Iona, 657 to 669. This narrative was first published by Colgan in the *Trias Thaumaturga*, afterwards in the first volume of the *Acta Sanctorum ordinis S. Benedicti*, and finally by the Bollandists, vol. ii. June.

[2] Adamnan, who was born in 624, must have written the biography of St. Columba between 690 and 703, a period at which he gave up the liturgical traditions of the Scots and the direction of the monastery of Iona to settle near the Anglo-Saxon king of Northumbria, Aldfrid (VARIN, *Premier Mémoire*, p. 172). Adamnan's work was first published by Canisius in his *Thesaurus Antiquitatum* in 1604; afterwards with four other biographies of the same saint by the Franciscan Colgan, in his *Trias Thaumaturga* (Louvain, 1647); by the Bollandists in 1698; and finally by Pinkerton, a Scotch antiquary of the last century. It has just been reprinted, after a MS. of the eighth century, by the Rev. Dr. W. Reeves, for the Celtic Archæological Society of Dublin, with maps, glossary, and appendix; Dublin, 1857. This excellent publication, which is distinguished by an impartiality too rare among learned English authors, has rendered a considerable service both to the hagiography and to the national history of Ireland and Scotland.

[3] Among others, Camden, in the sixteenth century; Fleury at certain points (Book xxxix. c. 36); and Augustin Thierry, in the first editions of his *Histoire de la Conquête d'Angleterre*.

missionary of the British Isles, we shall adopt, from the different versions of his name, that of Columba. His countrymen have almost always named him *Columb-Kill* or *Cille*, that is to say, the *dove of the cell*, thus adding to his primitive name a special designation, intended to recall either the essentially monastic character of the saint, or the great number of communities founded and governed by him.[1] He was a scion of one of those great Irish races, of whom it is literally true to say that they lose themselves in the night of ages, but which have retained to our own day, thanks to the tenacious attachment of the Irish people to their national recollections, through all the vicissitudes of conquest, persecution, and exile, a rank more patriotic and popular than that of mere nobility or aristocratic lineage. This was the great race of the Nialls or O'Donnells[2] (*clan Domhnaill*), which, native to and master of all the north-western part of the island (the modern counties of Tyrconnell, Tyrone, and Donegal), held sovereign sway in Hibernia and Caledonia, over the two shores of the Scottish sea, during the sixth century. Almost without interruption, up to 1168, kings, springing from its different branches, exercised in Ireland the supreme monarchy—that is to say, a sort of primacy

[1] "Qui videlicet Columba nunc a nonnullis, composito a cella et columba nomine, Columcelli vocatur."—BEDE, *Hist. Eccles.*, v. 9. "Eo quod multarum cellarum, id est, monasteriorum vel ecclesiarum institutor, fundator et rector fuit."—NOTKER BALBULUS, *Martyrol.*, 9 Jun.

[2] There is a history of the saint in Irish by Magnus O'Donnell, who describes himself as prince of Tyrconnell. It was put together in 1532, and the original MS. is to be found in the Bodleian. It is a legendary compilation, founded upon the narrative of Adamnan, but augmented by a crowd of fabulous legends, though at the same time by important Irish traditions and historical details in honour of the race of O'Donnell, which was that of the saint and of the historian. It has been abridged, translated into Latin, and published by Colgan in the *Triades Thaumaturgæ*. This volume is the second of the author's collected works, entitled *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ, seu sacræ ejusdem insulæ antiquitates*, which he was not able to finish, and which unfortunately includes only the saints of the first three months of the year. I have found a copy of this very rare collection in only one of all the Paris libraries, that of St. Geneviève.

over the provincial kings, which has been compared to that of metropolitan over bishops, but which rather recalls the feudal sovereignty of the Salic emperors, or of the kings of the family of Capet over the great vassals of Germany and France, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Nothing could be more unsettled or stormy than the exercise of this sovereignty. It was incessantly disputed by some vassal king, who generally succeeded by force of arms in robbing the supreme monarch of his crown and his life, and replacing him upon the throne of Tara, with a tolerable certainty of being himself similarly treated by the son of the dethroned prince.[1] Besides, the right of succession in Ireland was not regulated by the law of primogeniture. According to the custom known under the name of *Tanistry*, the eldest blood-relation succeeded every deceased prince or chief, and the brother in consequence preceded the son in the order of succession.

After the English conquest, the warlike and powerful race of Nialls was able to maintain, by dint of dauntless perseverance, a sort of independent sovereignty in the north-west of Ireland. The names of the O'Neills and O'Donnells, chiefs of its two principal branches, and too often at war with each other, are to be found on every page of the annals of unhappy Ireland. After the Reformation, when religious persecution had come in to aggravate all the evils of the conquest, these two houses supplied their indignant and unsubdued country with a succession of heroic soldiers who struggled to the death against the perfidious and sanguinary despotism of the Tudors and Stuarts. Ten centuries passed

[1] Let us recall in this connection the very ancient division of Ireland into four provinces or kingdoms : to the north, Ulster or Ultonia ; to the south, Munster or Mommonia ; to the east, Leinster or Lagenia ; to the west, Connaught or Connocia. A distinct district, the antique Sacred Middle of Ireland, represented by the counties of Meath and Westmeath, surrounded the royal residence of Tara, celebrated in Moore's melodies, and some ruins of which still remain. This district was exclusively dependent on the supreme monarch. See the map annexed to this volume.

in such desperate struggles have not weakened the traditions which link the saint whose history we are about to tell to those champions of an ancient faith and an outraged country. Even under the reign of Elizabeth, the vassals of young Hugh O'Donnell, called Red Hugh,[1] so renowned in the poetical records and popular traditions of Erin, and the most dangerous antagonist of English tyranny, recognised in him the hero indicated in the prophetic songs of Columb-Kill, and thus placed his glory and that of his ancestors under the wing of the *dove of the cells*, as under a patronage at once domestic and celestial.[2]

The father of Columba was descended from one of the eight sons of the great king Niall of the Nine Hostages,[3] who was supreme monarch of all Ireland from 379 to 405, at the period when Patrick was brought to the island as a slave.

[1] Taken prisoner by the English in his cradle, he died at the age of twenty-nine, in 1602, at Simancas, where he had gone to seek aid from Spain. His brother, the heir of his power in Ireland, also died in exile in Rome, where his tomb may still be seen in San Pietro in Montorio.

[2] REEVES, *Adamnan*, p. 34. O'CURRY, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History*, 1861, p. 328. The eight great races of Ireland, sung by the bards and celebrated in the national history, are these:—

O'Neill and O'Donnell,	in the north.	O'Moore and O'Byrne,	in the east.
O'Brien and M'Carthy,	in the south.	O'Connor and O'Rourke,	in the west.

The principality of Tyrconnell, confiscated by James I., contained 1,165,000 acres. "I would rather," said the most illustrious of the O'Neills in 1597, "be O'Neill of Ulster than king of Spain." Nevertheless the chiefs of these two great races are generally described by the annalists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as earls of Tyrconnell, a title which had been conferred upon them by the English crown in the hope of gaining them over. The articles upon the O'Neills and O'Donnells in Sir Bernard Burke's interesting work, *Vicissitudes of Families*, should be read on this subject. The posterity of the O'Donnells still flourishes in an elevated position in Austria.

[3] Because he had received nine hostages from a king whom he had conquered.

Consequently he sprang from a race which had reigned in Ireland for six centuries; and in virtue of the ordinary law of succession, might himself have been called to the throne.[1] His mother belonged to a reigning family in Leinster, one of the four subordinate kingdoms of the island. He was born at Gartan, in one of the wildest districts of the present county of Donegal—where the slab of stone upon which his mother lay at the moment of his birth is still shown. He who passes a night upon that stone is cured for ever from the pangs of nostalgia, and will never be consumed, while absent or in exile, by a too passionate love for his country. Such at least is the belief of the poor Irish emigrants, who flock thither at the moment when they are about to abandon the confiscated and ravaged soil of their country to seek their living in America, moved by a touching recollection of the great missionary who gave up his native land for the love of God and human souls.

Before his birth, his mother had a dream, which posterity has accepted as a graceful and poetical symbol of her son's career. An angel appeared to her, bringing her a veil covered with flowers of wonderful beauty, and the sweetest variety of colours; immediately after she saw the veil carried away by the wind, and rolling out as it fled over plains, woods, and mountains: then the angel said to her, "Thou art about to become the mother of a son, who shall blossom for heaven, who shall be reckoned among the prophets of God, and who shall lead numberless souls to the heavenly country."[2] This spiritual power, this privilege of

[1] An ancient life of the saint, in Irish, quoted by Dr. Reeves, p. 269, expressly states this fact, and adds that he gave up his right to the throne only for the love of God.

[2] "Quoddam miræ pulchritudinis peplum detulit, in quo veluti universorum decorosi colores florum depicti videbantur. . . . Peplum a se elongari volando videbat, camporumque latitudinem in majus crescendo excedere, montesque et saltus majore sui mensura superare. . . . Talem filium editura es floridum, qui quasi unus prophetarum Dei inter ipsos connumerabitur, innumerabiliumque animarum dux ad cœlestem a Deo patriam est prædestinatus."—ADAMN., iii. 1.

leading souls to heaven, was recognised by the Irish people, converted by St. Patrick, as the greatest glory which its princes and great men could gain.

The Irish legends, which are always distinguished, even amidst the wildest vagaries of fancy, by a high and pure morality, linger lovingly upon the childhood and youth of the predestined saint. They tell us how, confided in the first place to the care of the priest who had baptized him, and who gave him the first rudiments of literary education, he was accustomed from his earliest years to the heavenly visions which were to occupy so large a place in his life. His guardian angel often appeared to him ; and the child asked if all the angels in heaven were as young and shining as he. A little later Columba was invited by the same angel to choose among all the virtues those which he would like best to possess. "I choose," said the youth, "chastity and wisdom ;" and immediately three young girls of wonderful beauty, but foreign air, appeared to him, and threw themselves on his neck to embrace him. The pious youth frowned, and repulsed them with indignation. "What!" they said ; "then thou dost not know us?" "No, not the least in the world." "We are three sisters whom our father gives to thee to be thy brides." "Who, then, is your father?" "Our father is God, He is Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour of the world." "Ah, you have indeed an illustrious father. But what are your names?" "Our names are Virginity, Wisdom, and Prophecy ; and we come to leave thee no more, to love thee with an incorruptible love." [1]

[1] "Ergo ne angeli omnes ita juvenili ætate floretis, ita splendide vestiti ornatique inceditis? . . . Age ergo, quid eligis ediscere. . . . Tres adstitere virgines admirandi decoris et peregrini vultus, quas statim in ejus amplexus et oscula improviso ruentes, pudicitiæ cultor contracta fronte . . . abigebat. Ergo ne nos non agnoscis quarum basia et amores viliter aspernas? . . . Prorsus quæ sitis ignoro. . . . Tres sumus sorores et sponsæ tibi nuper a patre nostro desponsatæ. . . . Ecquis vero est vester pater? . . . Magni estis profecto parentis filiæ ; pergite, quæso, etiam nomina vestra recludere."—O'Donnell, *Vita quinta S. Columbæ*, i. 36, 37, 38, ap. Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 394.

From the house of the priest, Columba passed into the great monastic schools, which were not only a nursery for the clergy of the Irish Church, but where also young laymen of all conditions were educated. Columba, like many others, there learned to make his first steps in that monastic life to which he had been drawn by the call of God. He devoted himself not only to study and prayer, but also to the manual toil then inseparable, in Ireland and everywhere else, from a religious profession. Like all his young companions, he had to grind overnight the corn for the next day's food: but when his turn came, it was so well and quickly done that his companions suspected him of having been assisted by an angel.[1] The royal birth of Columba procured him several distinctions in the schools which were not always to the satisfaction of his comrades. One of the latter, named Kieran, who was also destined to fill a great place in Scotic legend, became indignant at the ascendancy of Columba: but while the two students disputed, a celestial messenger came to Kieran and placed before him an auger, a plane, and an axe, saying, "Look at these tools, and recollect that these are all thou hast sacrificed for God, since thy father was only a carpenter; but Columba has sacrificed the sceptre of Ireland, which might have come to him by right of his birth and the grandeur of his race."[2]

We learn from authentic documents that Columba completed his monastic life under the direction of two holy abbots, both bearing the name of Finnian. The first, who was also a bishop, ordained him deacon, but seems to have had

[1] "Ordinariæ illis epulæ cibarius panis; labor vero in singulos per vices distributus, nocturna lucubratione grana emolere, ex quibus hujusmodi panis pro communi omnium victu conficeretur. Id labori cum Columbæ, quia contubernalis esset, sæpius obtigisset, prompte et humillime acceptavit."—O'DONNELL, i. 42.

[2] "Delapsus e cœlo bonus genius . . . terebram, asciam et securim Kierano præsentans. Hæcce, inquit, aliaque hujusmodi, quibus tuus pater carpentariam exercebat, pro Dei amore reliquisti. Columba vero Hiberniæ sceptrum avito suo et generis potentia sperandum antequam offerretur abrenuntiavit."—O'DONNELL, i. 44.

him for a shorter time under his authority than the second Finnian, who, himself trained by a disciple of St. Patrick, had long lived in Cambria, near St. David. Columba's first steps in life are thus connected with the two great monastic apostles of Ireland and Cambria, the patriarchs of the two Celtic races which up to this time had shown the most entire fidelity to the Christian faith, and the greatest predilection for monastic life. The abbot Finnian who ordained Columba priest, ruled at Clonard the monastery which he had founded, and of which we have already spoken—one of those immense conventual establishments which were to be found nowhere but among the Celts, and which recalled to recollection the monastic towns of the Thebaïd. He had made of his monastery one great school, which was filled with the Irish youth, then, as always, consumed by a thirst for religious instruction ; and we again find here the favourite number, so often repeated by Celtic tradition, of three thousand pupils, all eager to receive the instructions of him who was called the Master of Saints.[1]

While Columba studied at Clonard, being still only a deacon, an incident took place which has been proved by authentic testimony, and which fixed the general attention upon him by giving a first evidence of his supernatural and prophetic intuition. An old Christian bard (the bards were not all Christians), named Gemmaïn, had come to live near the abbot Finnian, asking from him, in exchange for his poetry, the secret of fertilising the soil. Columba, who continued all his life a passionate admirer of the traditionary

[1] VARIN, *Deuxième Mémoire*, p. 47. "Magister sanctorum Hiberniæ, habuit in sua schola de Cluain-Evaird tria millia sanctorum."—*Martyrol. Dungal*, ap. MOORE, *History of Ireland*, vol. i. ch. 13. The holy abbot Finnian died in 549. The other Finnian, the first master of Columb-Kill, is also known under the name of Finnbar, and was abbot at Maghbile (Down), and died in 579. It is believed that he was St. Fredianus (Frediano), bishop and patron of Lucca, where there is a fine and curious church under his invocation. Colgan has published the lives of both, 28th February and 18th March, *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*. The two saints are frequently confounded.—Compare ADAMNAN, i. 1 ; ii. 1 ; iii. 4.

poetry of his nation, determined to join the school of the bard, and to share his labours and studies. The two were reading together out of doors, at a little distance from each other, when a young girl appeared in the distance pursued by a robber. At the sight of the old man the young fugitive made for him with all her remaining strength, hoping, no doubt, to find safety in the authority exercised throughout Ireland by the national poets. Gemmaïn, in great trouble, called his pupil to his aid to defend the unfortunate child, who was trying to hide herself under their long robes, when her pursuer reached the spot. Without taking any notice of her defenders, he struck her in the neck with his lance, and was making off, leaving her dead at their feet. The horrified old man turned to Columba. "How long," he said, "will God leave unpunished this crime which dishonours us?" "For this moment only," said Columba, "not longer; at this very hour, when the soul of this innocent creature ascends to heaven, the soul of the murderer shall go down to hell." At the instant, like Ananias at the words of Peter, the assassin fell dead. The news of this sudden punishment, the story goes, went over all Ireland, and spread the fame of the young Columba far and wide.[1]

It is easy to perceive, by the importance of the monastic establishments which he had brought into being even before he had attained the age of manhood, that his influence must have been as precocious as it was considerable. Apart from the virtues of which his after life afforded so many examples, it may be supposed that his royal birth gave him an irresis-

[1] "Carminator . . . habens secum carmen magnificum."—*Vita S. Finniani*, ap. COLGAN, *Acta SS.*, p. 395. "Senex perturbatus tali subitatione Columbam eminus legentem advocavit, ut ambo in quantum valuissent filiam a persequente defenderent. . . . Filiam sub vestimentis eorum jugulavit, et, relinquens jacentem mortuam super pedes eorum, abire cœpit. . . . Quanto, sancte puer Columba, hoc scelus temporis spatio inultum fieri judex justus patietur. . . . Eadem hora qua interfectæ ab eo filiæ anima ascendet ad cœlos, anima ipsius interfectoris descendet ad inferos."—ADAMNAN ii. 25.

tible ascendancy in a country where, since the introduction of Christianity, all the early saints, like the principal abbots, belonged to reigning families, and where the influence of blood and the worship of genealogy continue, even to this day, to a degree unknown in other lands. Springing, as has been said, from the same race as the monarch of all Ireland, and consequently himself eligible for the same high office, which was more frequently obtained by election or usurpation than inheritance—nephew or near cousin of the seven monarchs who successively wielded the supreme authority during his life—he was also related by ties of blood to almost all the provincial kings.[1] Thus we see him, during his own career, treated on a footing of perfect intimacy and equality by all the princes of Ireland and of Caledonia, and exercising a sort of spiritual sway equal or superior to the authority of secular sovereigns.

Before he had reached the age of twenty-five he had presided over the creation of a crowd of monasteries. As many as thirty-seven in Ireland alone recognised him as their founder. The most ancient and important of these foundations were situated, as was formerly that of St. Bridget at Kildare,[2] in vast oak-forests, from which they took their name. The first, Durrow (*Dair-mach, Roboreti campus*), where a cross and well bearing the name of Columba are still to be seen, was erected in the central region called the *umbilical*, or sacred middle of Ireland. The other, Derry (*Doire-chalgaich, Roboretum Calgachi*), is situated in the northern part of the island, in Columba's native province, in the hollow of a bay of that sea which separates Ireland from Scotland. After having long been the seat of a great and rich Catholic bishopric, it became, under its modern name of Londonderry, one of the principal centres of English colonisation, and was, in 1690, the bulwark of the Protestant conquest against the powerless efforts of the last of the

[1] See the genealogical tables, Dr. Reeves's Appendix.

[2] See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 246.

Stuart kings.[1] But nothing then indicated the possibility of those lamentable changes, nor of the miserable triumphs of inhuman force and wicked persecution.

The young Columba was specially attached to Derry, where he habitually lived. He superintended with care not only the discipline and studies of his community, but external matters, even so far as to watch over the preservation of the neighbouring forest. He would never permit an oak to be cut down. Those which fell by natural decay, or were struck down by the wind, were alone made use of for the fire which was lighted on the arrival of strangers, or distributed to the neighbouring poor. The poor had a first right, in Ireland as everywhere else, to the goods of the monks; and the monastery of Derry fed a hundred applicants every day with methodical regularity.[2]

[1] Dr. Reeves gives in his Appendix G a detailed enumeration of the thirty-seven foundations of Columb-Kill in Ireland. In the north of the island, and in his native province, we remark the name of Raphoe, until lately the seat of a diocese, and Tory, in an isle off the coast of Donegal; in the central district Sord, now *Swords*, seven miles from Dublin, which has retained, like Tory, its *round tower;* and Kells, which gained celebrity only in 807 as the refuge of the monks driven from Iona by the threats of the Norsemen. This monastery was completed in 814, and from that day became the headquarters of the Columban monks. Here is still to be seen one of the finest round towers of Ireland (seventy feet high); an oratory called *St. Columb-Kill's house;* a cemetery-cross with this inscription on the plinth—*Crux Patricii et Columbe.* Two celebrated Gospels of the Trinity College Bible at Dublin are called the *Book of Kells* and the *Book of Durrow.* In the important work of Dr. Petrie, called *Inquiry into the Origin and Uses of the Round Towers of Ireland,* 1845, 2nd ed., p. 430, will be found an engraving of a building near the cemetery of Kells, called St. Columba's house. It is a square building 23 feet long, 21 broad, and 38 feet high, but not vaulted. The walls are 4 feet in thickness; the roof is of stone, with two gables. It has little circular windows at a height of 15 feet. It was formerly divided into three chambers and two stories. In one of these chambers is to be seen a great flat stone 6 feet long, which is called the bed of Columba. The roof of this building is entirely covered with ivy. In the isle of Tory a round tower, belonging to the monastery constructed by Columba, still remains. Petrie (p. 389) also recognises round towers in the buildings quoted in connection with the two miracles told by Adamnan, c. 15, in which mention is made of bells and belfries.

[2] O'Donnell, ap. Colgan, p. 397, 398.

At a more advanced age our saint gave vent to his tenderness for his monastic creations in songs, an echo of which has come down to us. The text of these songs, such as has been preserved, is probably later than Columba; but it is written in the oldest Irish dialect, and it expresses, naturally enough, the sentiments of the founder and his disciples:—

"Were all the tribute of Scotia[1] mine,
From its midland to its borders,
I would give all for one little cell
In my beautiful Derry.
For its peace and for its purity,
For the white angels that go
In crowds from one end to the other,
I love my beautiful Derry.
For its quietness and its purity,
For heaven's angels that come and go
Under every leaf of the oaks,
I love my beautiful Derry.

My Derry, my fair oak grove,
My dear little cell and dwelling,
O God in the heavens above!
Let him who profanes it be cursed.
Beloved are Durrow and Derry,
Beloved is Raphoe the pure,
Beloved the fertile Drumhome,
Beloved are Sords and Kells!
But sweeter and fairer to me
The salt sea where the sea-gulls cry

[1] Let us repeat here that the names of *Scotia*, *Scotti*, when they occur in works of the seventh to the twelfth century, are almost exclusively applied to Ireland and the Irish, and were extended later to Scotland proper, the north and west of which were peopled by a colony of Irish Scots, only at a later period. From thence comes the name of *Erse*, *Erysche*, or *Irish*, retained up to our own day, by the Irish dialect, otherwise called Gaelic. In Adamnan, as in Bede, Scotia means Ireland, and modern Scotland is comprehended in the general title of Britannia. At a later period the name of Scotia disappeared in Ireland, and became identified with the country conquered and colonised by the *Scots* in Scotland, like that of *Anglia* in Britain, and *Francia* in Gaul.

When I come to Derry from far,
It is sweeter and dearer to me—
Sweeter to me." [1]

Nor was it only his own foundations which he thus celebrated: another poem has been preserved which is attributed to him, and which is dedicated to the glory of the monastic isle of Arran, situated upon the western coast of Ireland, where he had gone to venerate the inhabitants and the sanctuaries.[2]

"O Arran, my sun; my heart is in the west with thee. To sleep on thy pure soil is as good as to be buried in the land of St. Peter and St. Paul. To live within the sound of thy bells is to live in joy. O Arran, my sun, my love is in the west with thee." [3]

These poetic effusions reveal Columba to us under one of his most attractive aspects, as one of the minstrels of the national poetry of Ireland, the intimate union of which with the Catholic faith,[4] and its unconquerable empire over the souls of that generous people, can scarcely be exaggerated. Columba was not only himself a poet, but lived always in great and affectionate sympathy with the bards who, at that time, occupied so high a place in the social and political institutions of Ireland, and who were to be met with everywhere, in the palaces and monasteries, as on the public roads. What he did for this powerful corporation, and how, after having been their brother and friend, he became their protector and saviour, will be seen further on. Let us merely

[1] See REEVES, pp. 288, 289. The origin and continuation of this poem will be seen further on.

[2] "Invisit aliquando S. Endeum aliosque sanctos, qui plurimi in Ara insula angelicam vitam ducebant . . . in ea insula quam sanctorum vestigiis tritam et monumentis inclytam magno affectu venerabatur."—O'DONNELL, book i. c. 105, 106. Compare COLGAN, *Act. SS. Hibernicæ*, vol. i. p. 704-714. There were still thirteen churches on this island in 1645, with the tombs of St. Enda and of a hundred and twenty other saints.

[3] Quoted in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society*, p. 183.

[4] See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 244.

state at present that, himself a great traveller, he received the travelling bards in the different communities where he lived; among others, in that which he had built upon an islet[1] of the lake which the Boyle traverses before it throws itself into the Shannon. He confided to them the care of arranging the monastic and provincial annals, which were to be afterwards deposited in the charter-chest of the community; but, above all, he made them sing for his own pleasure and that of his monks; and the latter reproached him energetically if he permitted one of those wandering poets to depart without having asked to hear some of his chants, accompanied by his harp.[2]

The monk Columba was, then, a poet. After Ossian and his glorious compeer of the Vosges, he opens the series of two hundred Irish poets, whose memories and names, in default of their works, have remained dear to Ireland. He wrote his verses not only in Latin, but also and more frequently in Irish. Only three of his Latin poems survive; but two centuries ago eleven of his Irish poems were still in existence,[3] which have not all perished, and the most authentic of which is dedicated to the glory of St. Bridget, the virgin slave, patroness of Ireland and foundress of female religious life in the Isle of Saints. She was still living when

[1] The ruins of a church attributed to Columba are still to be seen there. Two miles from this island, on the banks of a cascade formed by the Boyle, as it throws itself into the lake (Loch Key), rises another monastery founded by him, and which became, in 1161, a Cistercian abbey of some celebrity—the abbey of Boyle.

[2] "Quidam Scoticus poeta. . . . Cur a nobis regredienti Cronano poetæ aliquod ex more suæ artis canticum non postulasti laudabiliter decantari?" —ADAMNAN, book i. c. 42.

[3] "Diversa poemata S. Columbæ patrio idiomate scripta exstant penes me."—COLGAN, *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 472. He gives the title and quotes the first verse of each Irish poem. Dr. Reeves has given in his Appendix F the Irish text and English translation of two of these pieces, the MS. of which has passed from the hands of the Franciscans of Louvain, where the pious and patriotic Colgan wrote, to the library of Bourgogne at Brussels They are also to be found in the Bodleian at Oxford, in a MS. which contains thirty-six Irish poems attributed to Columba.

Columba was born.[1] Through the obscure and halting efforts of this infantine poetry, some tones of sincere and original feeling may yet be disentangled :—

"Bridget, the good and the virgin,
Bridget, our torch and our sun,
Bridget, radiant and unseen,
May she lead us to the eternal kingdom !
May Bridget defend us
Against all the troops of hell,
And all the adversities of life ;
May she beat them down before us.
All the ill movements of the flesh,
This pure virgin whom we love,
Worthy of honour without end,
May she extinguish in us.
Yes, she shall always be our safeguard,
Dear saint of Lagenia ;
After Patrick she comes the first,
The pillar of the land,
Glorious among all glories,
Queen among all queens.
When old age comes upon us,
May she be to us as the shirt of hair,
May she fill us with her grace,
May Bridget protect us."[2]

It seems thus apparent that Columba was as much a bard as a monk during the first part of his life ; he had the vaga-

[1] He was born in 519, and she died in 523, according to the chronology of Colgan.

[2] "Nos defendamur omni tempore
Per meam sanctam de Lagenia
Suppar columna regni,
Post Patricium primarium :
Quæ decor decorum
Quæ regina regia. . . .
Erit post senium
Nostrum corpus in cilicio :
Ejus gratia respergamur.
Nos protegat Brigicta."

—*Trias Thaumat.*, p. 606.

bond inclination, the ardent, agitated, even quarrelsome character of the race. Like most Irish saints and even monks whom history has kept in mind, he had a passionate love for travelling;[1] and to that passion he added another which brought him more than one misadventure. Books, which were less rare in Ireland than everywhere else, were nevertheless much sought after, and guarded with jealous care in the monastic libraries, which were their sole depositories. Not only an excessive value was put upon them, but they were even supposed to possess the emotions and almost the passions of living beings. Columba had a passion for fine manuscripts, and one of his biographers attributes to him the laborious feat of having transcribed with his own hand three hundred copies of the Gospel or of the Psalter.[2] He went everywhere in search of volumes which he could borrow or copy, often experiencing refusals which he resented bitterly. There was then in Ossory, in the south-west, a holy recluse, very learned, doctor in laws and in philosophy, named Longarad *with the white legs*, because in walking barefoot his legs, which were covered with white hair, were visible. Columba, having gone to visit him, asked leave to examine his books. The old man gave a direct refusal; then Columba burst forth in denunciations—"May thy books no longer do thee any good, neither to thee nor to those who come after thee, since thou takest occasion by them to show thy inhospitality." This curse was heard, according to the legend. As soon as old Longarad died his books became unintelligible. They still exist, says an author of the ninth century, but no man can read them. The legend adds that in all the schools of Ireland, and even in Columba's own cell, the leathern satchels in which the monks and students carried their books, unhooked themselves from the wall and

[1] "Omnes regni provincias continuo peragrans, urbes, oppida, paga circumiens."—O'Donnell, p. 398.

[2] O'Donnell, ap. Colgan, p. 438. The same number has been seen above attributed to Dega. Irish narratives know scarcely any numerals but those of three hundred and three thousand.

fell to the ground on the day of the old philosopher's death.[1]

A similar narrative, more authentic but not less singular, serves as an introduction to the decisive event which changed the destiny of Columba, and transformed him from a wandering poet and ardent bookworm into a missionary and apostle. While visiting his ancient master, Finnian, our saint found means to make a clandestine and hurried copy of the abbot's Psalter, by shutting himself up at night in the church where the Psalter was deposited, lighting his nocturnal work, as happened to I know not what Spanish saint, by the light which escaped from his left hand while he wrote with the right. The abbot Finnian discovered what was going on by means of a curious wanderer, who, attracted by that singular light, looked in through the keyhole, and, while his face was pressed against the door, had his eye suddenly torn out by a crane, one of those familiar birds who were permitted by the Irish monks to seek a home in their churches.[2] Indignant at what he thought a theft, Finnian claimed the copy when it was finished, on the ground that a copy made without permission ought to belong to the master of the original, seeing that the transcription is the son of the original book. Columba refused to give up his work, and the question was referred to the king in his palace at Tara.

King Diarmid, or Dermott, supreme monarch of Ireland, was, like Columba, descended from the great king Niall, but by another son than he whose great-grandson Columba was. He lived, like all the princes of his country, in a close union with the Church, which was represented in Ireland, more completely than anywhere else, by the monastic order. Exiled and persecuted in his youth, he had found refuge in an island, situated in one of those lakes which interrupt the

[1] *Festilogium* of Angus the Culdee, quoted by O'Curry.

[2] "Admoto ad januæ fissuram oculo, mirari cœpit. . . . Grus quædam circurata, quæ in ecclesia erat, incauti hominis oculum impecto rostro effodit."—O'Donnell, book ii. c. 1.

course of the Shannon, the chief river of Ireland, and had there formed a friendship with a holy monk called Kieran, who was no other than the son of the carpenter, the jealous comrade of Columba at the monastic school of Clonard, but since that time his generous rival in knowledge and in austerity. Upon the still solitary bank of the river the two friends had planned the foundation of a monastery, which, owing to the marshy nature of the soil, had to be built upon piles. "Plant with me the first stake," the monk said to the exiled prince, "putting your hand under mine; and soon that hand shall be over all the men of Erin;" and it happened that Diarmid was very shortly after called to the throne. He immediately used his new power to endow richly the monastery which was rendered doubly dear to him by the recollection of his exile and of his friend. This sanctuary became, under the name of Clonmacnoise, one of the greatest monasteries and most frequented schools of Ireland, and even of Western Europe. It was so rich in possessions and even in dependent communities, daughters or vassals of its hierarchical authority, that, according to a popular saying, half of Ireland was contained within the enclosure of Clonmacnoise. This enclosure actually contained nine churches, with two round towers; the kings and lords of the two banks of the Shannon had their burying-place there for a thousand years, upon a green height which overlooks the marshy banks of the river. The sadly picturesque ruins may still be seen, and among them a stone cross, over which the prince and the abbot, holding between them the stake consecrated by the legend, are roughly sculptured.[1]

[1] Clonmacnoise, which is situated on the eastern bank of the Shannon, seven miles below Athlone, and was afterwards made a bishop's see, must not be confounded with Cloyne, though the Latin designation, *Clonensis* or *Cluanensis*, is the same. This great abbey is chiefly remarkable on account of its abbot Tighernach (1088), a much quoted historian, whose annals have been published in the second volume of *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores* by O'Connor. Within its vast enclosure was a community of those lay monks called *Culdees*, of whom we shall have occasion to speak further

This king might accordingly be regarded as a competent judge in a contest at once monastic and literary; he might even have been suspected of partiality for Columba, his kinsman—and yet he pronounced against him. His judgment was given in a rustic phrase which has passed into a proverb in Ireland—*To every cow her calf*,[1] and, consequently, to every book its copy. Columba protested loudly. "It is an unjust sentence," he said, "and I will revenge myself." After this incident a young prince, son of the provincial king of Connaught, who was pursued for having committed an involuntary murder, took refuge with Columba, but was seized and put to death by the king. The irritation of the poet-monk knew no bounds. The ecclesiastical immunity which he enjoyed in his quality of superior and founder of several monasteries ought to have, in his opinion, created a sort of sanctuary around his person, and this immunity had been scandalously violated by the execution of the youth whom he protected. He threatened the king with prompt vengeance. "I will denounce," he said, "to my brethren and my kindred thy wicked judgment, and the violation in my person of the immunity of the Church; they will listen to my complaint, and punish thee sword in hand.[2] Bad king, thou shalt no

on, who had been created by a lay brother of the monastery called *Conn of the poor*, by reason of his great charity. Later in the twelfth century it passed into the hands of the regular canons of St. Augustin, who retained it up to the general spoliation.—O'CURRY, p. 60. *The Gentleman's Magazine* of February 1864, publishes a plan of the actual condition of Clonmacnoise, with a very interesting notice of the architecture of the ruins by Mr. Parker.

[1] "*Le gach boin a boinin, le gach leabhar a leabhran.*"

[2] "Scito, rex inique, quia amodo faciem meam in tua provincia non videbis donec. . . . Sicut me hodie coram senioribus tuis iniquo judicio despexisti, sic te Deus æternus in conspectu inimicorum tuorum te despiciet in die belli."—ANON. ap. USSERIUM, *De Primord. Eccles. Brit.*, cited by Colgan, p. 462. "Ego expostulabo cum fratribus et cognatis meis iniquum arbitrium tuum, et contemptam in me temeratamque Ecclesiæ immunitatem . . . et si non meam, at certe Dei regni atque Ecclesiæ causam ducto in te exercitu vindicabunt."—O'DONNELL, book ii. c. 7.

more see my face in thy province until God, the just Judge, has subdued thy pride. As thou hast humbled me to-day before thy lords and thy friends, God will humble thee on the battle day before thine enemies." Diarmid attempted to retain him by force in the neighbourhood; but, evading the vigilance of his guards, he escaped by night from the court of Tara, and directed his steps to his native province of Tyrconnell. His first stage was Monasterboyce, where he heard from the monks that the king had planted guards on all the ordinary roads to intercept him. He then continued his course by a solitary pathway over the desert hills which lay between him and the north of Ireland; and as he went upon his lonely way, his soul found utterance in a pious song. He fled, chanting the *Song of Trust*, which has been preserved to us, and which may be reckoned among the most authentic relics of the ancient Irish tongue. We quote from it the following verses:—

"Alone am I on the mountain,
O royal Sun; prosper my path,
And then I shall have nothing to fear.
Were I guarded by six thousand,
Though they might defend my skin,
When the hour of death is fixed,
Were I guarded by six thousand,
In no fortress could I be safe.
Even in a church the wicked are slain,
Even in an isle amidst a lake;
But God's elect are safe
Even in the front of battle.
No man can kill me before my day,
Even had we closed in combat;
And no man can save my life
When the hour of death is come.
My life!

This is assuredly a much modernised version of Columba's declaration of war; but the true facts are to be found in the unanimous statements of Irish tradition. Adamnan preserves a prudent silence upon all events anterior to the saint's mission to Scotland.

As God pleases let it be ;
Nought can be taken from it,
Nought can be added to it :
The lot which God has given
Ere a man dies must be lived out.
He who seeks more, were he a prince,
Shall not a mite obtain.
A guard !
A guard may guide him on his way ;
But can they, can they, guard
Against the touch of death ? . . .
Forget thy poverty awhile ;
Let us think of the world's hospitality.
The Son of Mary will prosper thee,
And every guest shall have his share.
Many a time
What is spent returns to the bounteous hand,
And that which is kept back
Not the less has passed away.
O living God !
Alas for him who evil works !
That which he thinks not of comes to him,
That which he hopes vanishes out of his hand.
There is no *Sreod*[1] that can tell our fate,
Nor bird upon the branch,
Nor trunk of gnarled oak. . . .
Better is He in whom we trust,
The King who has made us all,
Who will not leave me to-night without refuge.
I adore not the voice of birds,
Nor chance, nor the love of a son or a wife.
My Druid is Christ, the Son of God,
The Son of Mary, the great Abbot,
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
My lands are with the King of kings ;
My order at Kells and at Moone."[2]

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[1] An unknown Druidical term, probably meaning some pagan superstition of the same description as the flight of birds and the knots in the trees, mentioned immediately after.

[2] Moone, in the county of Kildare, where the abbatial cross of St. Columba is preserved. The translation here printed is from the version given by Dr. Reeves, with some slight modifications.—*Translator's note.*

"Thus sang Columba," says the preface to this *Song of Trust*, "on his lonely journey; and this song will protect him who repeats it while he travels."

Columba arrived safely in his province, and immediately set to work to excite against King Diarmid the numerous and powerful clans of his relatives and friends, who belonged to a branch of the house of Niall distinct from and hostile to that of the reigning monarch. His efforts were crowned with success. The Hy-Nialls of the North armed eagerly against the Hy-Nialls of the South, of whom Diarmid was the special chief.[1] They naturally obtained the aid of the king of Connaught, father of the young prince who had been executed. According to other narratives, the struggle was one between the Nialls of the North and the Picts established in the centre of Ireland. But in any case, it was the north and west of Ireland which took arms against the supreme king. Diarmid marched to meet them, and they met in battle at Cool-Drewny, or Cul-Dreimhne, upon the borders of Ultonia and Connacia. He was completely beaten, and obliged to take refuge at Tara. The victory was due, according to the annalist Tighernach, to the prayers and songs of Columba, who had fasted and prayed with all his might to obtain from Heaven the punishment of the royal insolence,[2] and who, besides, was present at the battle, and took upon himself before all men the responsibility of the bloodshed.

As for the manuscript which had been the object of this

1 "Contulit se ad domus Conalli, Gulbanis et Eugenii proceres carne sibi propinquos, et coram eis de malis injuriis querelam instituit."—COLGAN, *Act. SS. Hibern.*, vol. i. p. 645. Compare the genealogical table of the descendants of Niall given by Dr. Reeves, p. 251. There were ten supreme kings of the branch of Hy-Nialls of the North, or of Tyrconnell, to which Columba belonged, and seventeen of the southern branch, of which Diarmid was a member. These kings alternated for two centuries, mutually killing and dethroning each other. See the notes of Kelly to Lynch, *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. ii. pp. 12, 15.

2 "Diem ineundi prælii jejunio et oratione prævertit, Deum afflicte rogans ut regiæ insolentiæ vindicibus sine suorum damno annuat victoriam."— O'DONNELL, *loc. cit.*

strange conflict of copyright elevated into a civil war, it was afterwards venerated as a kind of national, military, and religious palladium. Under the name of *Cathac*, or *Fighter*, the Latin Psalter transcribed by Columba, enshrined in a sort of portable altar, became the national relic of the O'Donnell clan. For more than a thousand years it was carried with them to battle as a pledge of victory, on the condition of being supported upon the breast of a clerk pure from all mortal sin. It has escaped as by miracle from the ravages of which Ireland has been the victim, and exists still, to the great joy of all learned Irish patriots.[1]

Columba, though victor, had soon to undergo the double reaction of personal remorse and the condemnation of many pious souls.[2] The latter punishment was the first to be felt. He was accused, by a synod convoked in the centre of the royal domain at Teilte,[3] of having occasioned the shedding of Christian blood, and sentence of excommunication was in his absence pronounced against him. Perhaps this accusation was not entirely confined to the war which had been raised on account of the copied Psalter. His excitable and vindictive character, and, above all, his passionate attachment to his relatives, and the violent part which he took in

[1] The annals of the Four Masters report that in a battle waged in 1497 between the O'Donnells and the MacDermotts, the sacred book fell into the hands of the latter, who, however, restored it in 1499. It was preserved for thirteen hundred years in the O'Donnell family, and at present belongs to a baronet of that name, who has permitted it to be exhibited in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, where it can be seen by all. It is composed of fifty-eight leaves of parchment, bound in silver. The learned O'Curry (p. 322) has given a facsimile of a fragment of this MS., which he does not hesitate to believe is in the handwriting of our saint, as well as that of the fine copy of the Gospels called the *Book of Kells*, of which he has also given a facsimile. See Reeves's notes upon Adamnan, p. 250, and the pamphlet upon Marianus Scotus, p. 12.

[2] "Cum illata regi Diermitio clades paulo post ad aures sanctorum Hiberniæ pervenit, Columbam, quod tantæ cladis vel auctor vel occasio fuisset, taxabant."—O'Donnell, ii. 5. "In synodo sanctorum Hiberniæ gravis querela contra S. Columbam, tanquam auctorem tam multi sanguinis effusi, instituta est."—Colgan, *Act. SS. Hibern.*, p. 645.

[3] Now Teltown, a little village near Kells, in the county of Meath.

their domestic disputes and in their continually recurring rivalries, had engaged him in other struggles, the date of which is perhaps later than that of his first departure from Ireland, but the responsibility of which is formally imputed to him by various authorities,[1] and which also ended in bloody battles.

Columba was not a man to draw back before his accusers and judges. He presented himself before the synod which had struck without hearing him. He found a defender there in the famous abbot Brendan, the founder of the monastery of Birr. When Columba made his appearance, this abbot rose, went up to him, and embraced him. "How can you give the kiss of peace to an excommunicated man?" said some of the other members of the synod. "You would do as I have done," he answered, "and you never would have excommunicated him, had you seen what I see—a pillar of fire which goes before him, and the angels that accompany him. I dare not disdain a man predestined by God to be the guide of an entire people to eternal life." Thanks to the intervention of Brendan, or to some other motive not mentioned, the sentence of excommunication was withdrawn; but Columba was charged to win to Christ by his preaching as many pagan souls as the number of Christians who had fallen in the battle of Cool-Drewny.[2]

[1] Especially by the argument in Irish of the Latin poem of Columba called *Altus prosator*, which will be mentioned further on. This argument is quoted textually by Dr. Reeves, p. 253. This author is of opinion that the legendary writers have antedated all these troublesome occurrences out of consideration for the apostle of Caledonia, in order to concentrate all his eccentricities in the earlier part of his life before his voluntary expiation. Adamnan, who follows no chronological order, keeps silence on most of the events which preceded the voluntary exile of the saint, and only mentions vaguely the synod by which he was excommunicated; but he proves that after that exile Columba several times returned to Ireland, where his influence was always very considerable. "Cum a quodam synodo pro quibusdam venialibus et tam excusabilibus causis, non recte, ut post in fine claruit, excommunicaretur Columba . . . ad eamdem contra ipsum collectam venit congregationem. . . . Hoc tamen factum est in Teilte."—Book iii. c. 3.

[2] COLGAN, *loc. cit.*, p. 645.

It was then that his soul seems first to have been troubled, and that remorse planted in it the germs at once of a startling conversion and of his future apostolic mission. Sheltered as he was from all vengeance or secular penalties, he must have felt himself struck so much the more by the ecclesiastical judgment pronounced against him. Various legends reveal him to us at this crisis of his life, wandering along from solitude to solitude, and from monastery to monastery, seeking out holy monks, masters of penitence and Christian virtue, and asking them anxiously what he should do to obtain the pardon of God for the murder of so many victims.[1] One of these, Froëch, who had long been his friend, reproached him with affectionate severity for having been the instigator of that murderous fight. "It was not I who caused it," said Columba with animation; "it was the unjust judgment of King Diarmid—it was his violation of ecclesiastical immunity which did it all." "A monk," answered the solitary, "would have done better to bear the injury with patience than to avenge it with arms in his hands." "Be it so," said Columba; "but it is hard for a man unjustly provoked to restrain his heart and to sacrifice justice."[2]

He was more humble with Abban, another famous monk of the time, founder of many religious houses, one of which was called the *Cell of Tears*, because the special grace of weeping for sin was obtained there.[3] This gentle and

[1] "Petens . . . quo scilicet modo post necem multorum occisorum, benevolentiam Dei ac remissionem peccatorum obtinere mereretur."—*Vita S. Molassii*, ap. *Trias Thaumat.*, p. 461.

[2] "Non ego, sed iniquum in me Diermitii regis arbitrium, et prævaricatio ecclesiasticæ immunitatisisti prælio et malis inde secutis causam præbuit. . . . Præstaret religioso viro injuriam patienter perferre, quam pugnaciter propulsare. Ita est, infit S. Columba, sed injuste provocato haud pronum est erumpentem animi motum, præsertim cum justus esse videtur, cohibere."—O'DONNELL, *Vita quinta*, ii. 8.

[3] "Et istud monasterium a multis vocatur *Cealt nà ndèr*, id est cellula lacrymarum: eo quod hominibus ibi a Deo pœnitentiales lacrymæ . . . donantur."—*Vita S. Abbani*, ap. COLGAN, lib. i. p. 615.

courageous soldier of Christ was specially distinguished by his zeal against the fighting men and disturbers of the public peace. He had been seen to throw himself between two chiefs at the moment when their lances were crossed at each other's breasts;[1] and on another occasion had gone alone and unarmed to meet one of the most formidable rievers of the island, who was still a pagan and a member of a sovereign family, had made his arms drop from his hands, and had changed first into a Christian and then into a monk the royal robber, whose great-grandson has recorded this incident.[2] When Columba went to Abban, he said, "I come to beseech thee to pray for the souls of all those who have perished in the late war, which I raised for the honour of the Church. I know they will obtain grace by thy intercession, and I conjure thee to ask what is the will of God in respect to them from the angel who talks with thee every day." The aged solitary, without reproaching Columba, resisted his entreaties for some time, by reason of his great modesty, but ended by consenting; and after having prayed, gave him the assurance that these souls enjoyed eternal repose.[3]

Columba, thus reassured as to the fate of the victims of his rage, had still to be enlightened in respect to his own duty. He found the light which he sought from a holy monk called Molaise, famed for his studies of Holy Scripture,[4] who had

[1] "Tam appropinquabat ad alterutrum, ut lanceæ eorum ante se mixtæ essent invicem."—*Vita S. Abbani*, ap. COLGAN, lib. i. p. 619.

[2] "Quidam ex regali genere istius terræ . . . heros et tyrannus, qui semper occidit et rapit et vivit in latrociniis . . . videntes comites S. Abbani virum armigerum, horridissimum in incessu et habitu, cum simili turba militum . . . unusquisque hinc et inde cœpit se abscondere. Vir autem Dei fide armatus intrepidus viam ibat. . . . Ego autem qui vitam S. Abbani collegi sum nepos ipsius filii quem baptizavit."—*Ibid.*, p. 617.

[3] "Ut oros pro animabus illorum qui occisi fuerunt in bello commisso nuper nobis suadentibus, causa Ecclesiæ. . . . Et angelus eit: Requiem habebunt."—*Ibid.*, p. 624, after the MS. of Salamanca, which is more complete on this point than the ordinary text.

[4] "Visitavit S. Lasrianum confessorem suum. . . . Divinarum scripturarum scrutator."

already been his confessor, and whose ruined monastery is still visible in one of the isles of the Atlantic.[1] This severe hermit confirmed the decision of the synod; but to the obligation of converting to the Christian faith an equal number of pagans as there were of Christians killed in the civil war he added a new condition, which bore cruelly upon a soul so passionately attached to country and kindred. The confessor condemned his penitent to perpetual exile from Ireland.[2] Columba bowed to this sentence with sad resignation—"What you have commanded," he said, "shall be done."[3]

He announced his future fate in the first place to his relations, the warlike Nialls of Tyrconnell. "An angel has taught me that I must leave Ireland and remain in exile as long as I live, because of all those whom you slew in the last battle, which you fought on my account, and also in others which you know of."[4] It is not recorded that any among his kindred attempted to hold him back; but when he acquainted his disciples with his intended emigration, twelve among them decided to follow him. The most ardent of all was a young monk called Mochonna, son of the provincial king of Ulster. In vain Columba represented to him that he ought not to abandon his parents and native soil. "It is thou," answered the young man, "who art my father, the Church is my mother, and my country is where I can gather the largest harvest for Christ." Then, in order to render all resistance impossible, he made a solemn vow aloud to leave his country and follow Columba—"I swear to follow thee wherever thou goest, until thou hast led me to Christ, to whom thou hast consecrated me."[5] It was

[1] Innishmurry, on the coast of Sligo.

[2] *Vita S. Molassii*, ubi supra.

[3] "Quod indictum est, inquit ad Molassium, fiet."—O'Donnell, ii. 5.

[4] "Mihi, juxta quod ab angelo præmonitus sum, ex Hiberniæ migrandum est, et dum vixero exsulandum, quod mei causa per vos plurimi extincti sunt."—*Ibid.*, ii. 4.

[5] "Se peregrinationis socium non magis obtulit, quam obtrusit. . . . Tu mihi pater es, Ecclesia mater, et patria ubi uberiorem bene merendi sege-

thus, says his historian, that he forced himself rather than offered himself as a companion to the great exile in the course of his apostolical career among the Picts—and he had no more active or devoted auxiliary.

Columba accepted, though not without sadness, as has been seen, the sentence of his friend. He dedicated the rest of his life to the expiation of his faults by a voluntary exile, and by preaching the faith to the heathen. Up to this time we have had difficulty in disentangling the principal events of the first forty years of his life from a maze of confused and contradictory narratives. We have followed what has seemed to us the most probable account, and one most calculated to throw light upon the character of the saint, his people, and his country. Henceforward we shall find a surer guide in Adamnan, who only touches very slightly upon the first half of his hero's life, and who, with an apparent contempt for the unanimous testimony of Irish witnesses, while agreeing that the departure of the saint took place after the battle in which the king of Ireland had been beaten by Columba's kindred,[1] attributes his departure solely to his desire for the conversion of the heathens of the great neighbouring isle.[2]

tem et majorem Christo deserviendi ansam invenero. . . . Te quocumque ieris sequar, donec ad Christum perduxeris, cui me pridem consecraras."—O'DONNELL, *Vita Columbæ*, lib. iii. c. 24, 25, 26.

[1] "Post bellum Cule Drebene . . . quo tempore vir beatus de Scotia peregrinaturus primitus enavigavit."—ADAMN., i. 7. What is said of the poem called *Altus*, the composition of which was suggested by the remorse of Columba after his three battles, will be seen further on, p. 41.

[2] "De Scotis ad Britanniam pro Christo peregrinari volens, enavigavit."—ADAMN., *Præf.* The MS. of Salamanca, quoted by Colgan, adds: "*Ad convertendos ad fidem Pictos.*"

CHAPTER II

COLUMBA AN EMIGRANT IN CALEDONIA—THE HOLY ISLE OF IONA

Aspect of the Hebridean archipelago.—Columba first lands at Oronsay, but leaves it because Ireland is visible from its shores.—Description of Iona.—First buildings of the new monastery.—What remains of it.—Enthusiasm of Johnson on landing there in the eighteenth century.—Columba bitterly regrets his country.—Passionate elegies on the pains of exile.—Note upon the poem of *Altus*.—Proofs in his biography of the continuance of that patriotic regret.—The stork comes from Ireland to Iona.

He who has not seen the islands and gulfs of the western coast of Scotland, and who has not been tossed upon the sombre sea of the Hebrides, can scarcely form any image of it to himself. Nothing can be less seductive at the first glance than that austere and solemn nature, which is picturesque without charm, and grand without grace. The traveller passes sadly through an archipelago of naked and desert islands, sowed, like so many extinct volcanoes, upon the dull and sullen waters, which are sometimes broken by rapid currents and dangerous whirlpools. Except on rare days, when the sun—that pale sun of the North—gives life to these shores, the eye wanders over a vast surface of gloomy sea, broken at intervals by the whitening crest of waves, or by the foamy line of the tide, which dashes here against long reefs of rock, there against immense cliffs, with a forlorn roar which fills the air. Through the continual fogs and rains of that rude climate may be seen by times the summits of chains of mountains, whose abrupt and naked

sides slope to the sea, and whose base is bathed by those cold waves which are kept in constant agitation by the shock of contrary currents, and the tempests of wind which burst from the lakes and narrow ravines farther inland. The melancholy of the landscape is relieved only by that peculiar configuration of the coast, which has been remarked by the ancient authors, and especially by Tacitus—a configuration which exists besides only in Greece and Scandinavia.[1] As in the fiords of Norway, the sea cuts and hollows out the shores of the islands into a host of bays and gulfs, of strange depth, and as narrow as profound.[2] These gulfs take the most varied forms, penetrating by a thousand tortuous folds into the middle of the land, as if to identify themselves with the long and winding lakes of the Highland interior. Numberless peninsulas, terminating in pointed headlands, or summits covered with clouds; isthmuses so narrow as to leave the sea visible at both sides; straits so closely shut between two walls of rock that the eye hesitates to plunge into that gloom; enormous cliffs of basalt or of granite, their sides perforated with rents; caverns, as at Staffa, lofty as churches, flanked through all their length by prismatic columns, through which the waves of the ocean dash with groans; and here and there, in contrast with that wild majesty, perhaps in an island, perhaps upon the shore of the mainland, a sandy beach, a little plain covered with scanty prickling grass; a natural port, capable of sheltering a few frail boats; everywhere, in short, a strangely varied com-

[1] "Nusquam latius dominari mare, multum fluminum huc atque illuc ferre, nec littore tenus adcrescere aut resorberi, sed influere penitus atque ambire, etiam jugis atque montibus inseri velut in suo."—TACITUS, *Agricolæ Vita*, c. 10. "Diversorum prolixioribus promontoriorum tractibus, quæ arenatis Oceani sinibus ambiuntur."—GILDAS, vol. iii. p. 11, ed. Stevens.

[2] "Mare, quo latus ingens
Dant scopuli, et multa litus se valle receptat."
—PERSEUS, Sat. vi.

These lines of Perseus upon the *Riviera* of Genoa describe still better the western coast of Scotland.

bination of land and sea, but where the sea carries the day, penetrates and dominates everything, as if to affirm her empire, and, as Tacitus has said, "*inseri velut in suo.*"

Such is the present aspect—such must have been, with the addition of the forests which have disappeared, the aspect of those shores when Columba sought them to continue and end his life there. It was from this point that he was to assail the Land of Woods,[1] that unconquerable Caledonia, where the Romans had been obliged to relinquish the idea of establishing themselves, where Christianity hitherto had appeared only to vanish, and which for long seemed to Europe almost outside the boundaries of the world. To Columba was to fall the honour of introducing civilisation into the stony, sterile, and icy *Escosse la Sauvage*,[2] which the imagination of our fathers made the dwelling-place of hunger, and of the prince of demons. Sailing by these distant shores, who could refrain from evoking the holy memory and forgotten glory of the great missionary? It is from him that Scotland has derived that religious spirit which, led astray as it has been since the Reformation, and in spite of its own rigid narrowness, remains still so powerful, so popular, so fruitful, and so free.[3] Half veiled by the misty distance, Columba stands first among those original

[1] In Gaelic, *Calyddon*, land of forests, according to Augustin Thierry; according to Camden this name is derived from *kaled*, which means hard and wild.

[2] See the expressions of Jean de Meung, Froissart, and others, collected by M. Francisque Michel, in his fine and learned work, *Les Ecossais en France et les Français en Ecosse*, printed by Gounouilhou, Bordeaux, 1862, pp. 3-5. The words addressed by St. Louis when sick to his son are well known: "I pray thee to make thyself loved by the people of thy kingdom; for if thou rulest ill, I had rather that a Scot came from Scotland and reigned in thy place."—JOINVILLE, p. 4.

[3] This is evidenced by the wonderful outburst of the *Free Kirk*, produced in 1843 by a local dispute upon the lay patronage of parishes, and which has established in almost every village of Scotland a new community and a new church, sustained by voluntary contributions, in face of the official Church, which continues to hold a portion of the ecclesiastical possessions of Catholic times.

and touching historical figures to whom Scotland owes the great place she has occupied in the memory and imagination of modern nations, from the noble chivalry of the feudal and Catholic kingdom of the Bruces and Douglases, down to the unparalleled misfortunes of Mary Stuart and Charles Edward, and all the poetic and romantic recollections which the pure and upright genius of Walter Scott has endowed with European fame.

A voluntary exile, at the age of forty-two, from his native island, Columba embarked with his twelve companions[1] in one of those great barks of osier covered with hide which the Celtic nations employed for their navigation. He landed upon a desert island situated on the north of the opening of that series of gulf and lakes which, extending from the south-west to the north-east, cuts the Caledonian peninsula in two, and which at that period separated the still heathen Picts from the district occupied by the Irish Scots, who were partially Christianised. This isle, which he has made immortal, took from him the name of I-Colm-Kill (the island of Columb-Kill), but is better known under that of Iona.[2] A legend, suggested by one of our saint's most marked characteristics, asserts that he first landed upon another islet called Oronsay,[3] but that, having climbed a hill near the shore immediately on landing, he found that he could still see Ireland, his beloved country. To see far off that dear soil which he had left for ever, was too hard a trial. He came down from the hill, and immediately took to his boat to seek, farther off, a

[1] See their names in Appendix A of Reeves. Let us at present remark two among them whom we shall meet again further on. Baithen, Columba's secretary, and his successor as abbot of Iona, and Diormit or Dermott, his minister (*ministrator*), the monk specially attached to his person, after the young Mochonna, of whom mention has already been made.

[2] The primitive name was *Hy*, *Hii*, or *I*—that is to say, the isle, *the* isle *par excellence*. Iona, according to various authors, means the blessed isle. This last word is written Iova by Adamnan and the ancient authors; but usage has turned it into Iona.

[3] To the south of Colonsay, not far from the large island of Islay.

shore from which he could not see his native land. When he had reached Iona he climbed the highest point in the island, and, gazing into the distance, found no longer any trace of Ireland upon the horizon. He decided, accordingly, to remain upon this unknown rock. One of those heaps of stones, which are called *cairns* in the Celtic dialect, still marks the spot where Columba made this desiredly unfruitful examination, and has long borne the name of the Cairn of Farewell.[1]

Nothing could be more sullen and sad than the aspect of this celebrated isle, where not a single tree has been able to resist either the blighting wind or the destroying hand of man. Only three miles in length by two in breadth, flat and low, bordered by grey rocks which scarcely rise above the level of the sea, and overshadowed by the high and sombre peaks of the great island of Mull,[2] it has not even the wild beauty which is conferred upon the neighbouring isles and shores by their basalt cliffs, which are often of prodigious height—or which belongs to the hills, often green and rounded at the summit, whose perpendicular sides are beaten incessantly by those Atlantic waves, which bury themselves in resounding caverns hollowed by the everlasting labours of that tumultuous sea. Upon the narrow surface of the island white stretches of sand alternate with scanty pastures, a few poor crops, and the turf-moors where the inhabitants find their fuel. Poor as the culture is, it seems everywhere resisted and disputed by the gneiss

[1] *Carn cul ri Erin*—literally, *the back turned on Ireland.* Many historians are of opinion that the isle had been formerly inhabited by Druids, whose burying-place is still shown—*Clachnan Druineach.* O'Donnell says that they resisted the landing of the Irish emigrants; but Dr. Reeves contests this idea with very strong arguments. His edition of Adamnan contains a detailed map of Iona, with all the names of places in Celtic.

[2] "Where a turret's airy head
O'erlooked, dark Mull! thy mighty Sound,
Where thwarting tides, with mingled roar,
Part thy swarth hills from Morven's shore."
—WALTER SCOTT, *Lord of the Isles*, i. 7.

rocks, which continually crop out, and in some places form an almost inextricable labyrinth. The only attraction possessed by this sombre dwelling-place is the view of the sea, and of the mountains of Mull and the other islands, to the number of twenty or thirty, which may be distinguished from the top of the northern hills of Iona.[1] Among these is Staffa, celebrated for the grotto of Fingal, which has been known only for about a century, and which, in the time of Columba, moaned and murmured in its solitary and unknown majesty, in the midst of that Hebridean archipelago which is at present haunted by so many curious admirers of the Highland shores and ruined feudal castles, which the great bard of our century has enshrined in the glory of his verse.[2]

The bay where Columba landed is still called the *Bay of the osier bark, Port' a Churraich;* and a long mound is pointed out to strangers as representing the exact size of his boat, which was sixty feet long. The emigrant did not remain in this bay, which is situated in the middle of the isle; he went higher up, and, to find a little shelter from the great sea winds, chose for his habitation the eastern shore, opposite the large island of Mull, which is separated from Iona only by a narrow channel of a mile in breadth, and whose highest mountains,[3] situated more to the east, approach and almost identify themselves with the mountain tops of Morven, which are continually veiled with clouds. It was there that the emigrants built their huts of branches, for the island was not then, as now, destitute of wood.[4]

[1] This hill, the highest in the island, is only 320 feet above the level of the sea.

[2] In the *Lord of the Isles* Scott has given a poetic itinerary of all the archipelago so frequented by St. Columba. The powerful Celtic dynasties who, under the title of Lords of the Isles, ruled the Hebrides during the middle ages, were of the clan Macdonald: their sway extended over the district of Morven, which is the part of the mainland nearest to Iona.

[3] The highest mountain in Mull is 3178 feet in height.

[4] It is said that Columba retired *in saltibus* to pray. At present the

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When Columba had made up his mind to construct for himself and his people a settled establishment, the buildings of the new-born monastery were of the greatest simplicity. As in all Celtic constructions, walls of withes or branches, supported upon long wooden props, formed the principal element in their architecture. Climbing plants, especially ivy, interlacing itself in the interstices of the branches, at once ornamented and consolidated the modest shelter of the missionaries.[1] The Irish built scarcely any churches of stone, and retained, up to the twelfth century, as St. Bernard testifies, the habit of building their churches of wood. But it was not for some years after their first establishment that the monks of Iona permitted themselves the luxury of a wooden church; and when they did so, great oaks, such as the sterile and wind-beaten soil of their islet could not produce, had to be brought for its construction from the neighbouring shore.[2]

Thus the monastic capital of Scotland, and the centre of Christian civilisation in the north of Great Britain, came into being thirteen centuries ago. Some ruins of a much later date than the days of Columba, though still very ancient, mingled among a few cottages scattered on the shore, still point out the site.

"We were now treading," said, in the eighteenth century, the celebrated Johnson, who was the first to recall the attention of the British public to this profaned sanctuary—"we were now treading that illustrious island which was

inhabitants of Iona have no other wood than that which is thrown by the sea upon the beach. See in the Appendix No. 1 some notes upon the present condition of Iona.

[1] "Virgarum fasciculos ad hospitium construendum. . . . Binales sudes."—ADAMNAN, ii. 3–7. Dr. Reeves has put together several ancient authorities upon the materials of chapels and churches in Wales and Brittany. "Virgis torquatis muros perficientes . . . musco silvestri solum et hederæ nexibus adornato. . . . Virgas et fenum ad materiam cellæ construendæ. . . ."

[2] "Cum roboreæ . . . duodecim currucis congregatis, materiæ ad nostrum renovandum traherentur monasterium."

once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish, if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me, and from my friends, be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona!"[1]

Columba, who had been initiated into classic recollections, like all the monks of his time, had no doubt heard of Marathon; but certainly it could never have occurred to him that a day would come in which a descendant of the race he came to save should place his humble shelter in the same rank with the most glorious battlefield of Hellenic history.

Far from having any prevision of the glory of Iona, his soul was still swayed by a sentiment which never abandoned him—regret for his lost country. All his life he retained for Ireland the passionate tenderness of an exile, a love which displayed itself in the songs which have been preserved to us, and which date perhaps from the first moments of his exile. It is possible that their authenticity is not altogether beyond dispute; and that, like the poetic lamentations given forth by Fortunatus in the name of St. Radegund,[2] they were composed by his disciples and contemporaries. But they have been too long repeated as his, and depict too well what must have passed in his heart, to permit us to neglect them. "Death in faultless Ireland is

[1] BOSWELL'S *Tour to the Hebrides.* [2] See *ante,* vol. ii. . 174.

better than life without end in Albyn." After this cry of despair follow strains more plaintive and submissive. In one of his elegies [1] he laments that he can no longer sail on the lakes and bays of his native island, nor hear the song of the swans, with his friend Comgall. He laments above all to have been driven from Erin by his own fault, and because of the blood shed in his battles. He envies his friend Cormac, who can go back to his dear monastery at Durrow, and hear the wind sigh among the oaks, and the song of the blackbird and cuckoo. As for Columba, all is dear to him in Ireland *except the princes who reign there.* This last particular shows the persistence of his political rancour. No trace of this feeling, however, remains in a still more characteristic poem,[2] which must have been confided to some traveller as a message from the exile of Iona to his country. In this he celebrates, as always, the delight of voyaging round the coast of Ireland, and the beauty of its cliffs and beach. But, above all, he mourns over his exile :—

"What joy to fly upon the white-crested sea, and to watch the waves break upon the Irish shore! what joy to row the little bark, and land among the whitening foam upon the Irish shore! Ah! how my boat would fly if its prow were turned to my Irish oak-grove! But the noble sea now carries me only to Albyn,[3] the land of ravens. My foot is in my little boat, but my sad heart ever bleeds. There is a grey eye which ever turns to Erin; but never in this life shall it see Erin, nor her sons, nor her daughters.[4]

[1] Published by REEVES, Appendix, p. 275.

[2] REEVES, pp. 285–87. The original text of this poem is in very ancient Irish.

[3] *Alba*, *Albania*, is the name generally applied by Irish writers to that part of Great Britain which afterwards became Scotland. It is evidently the same as *Albion*, and later took the form of *Albany*, which has been always employed in the heraldic language of the two kingdoms as a title borne by the princes of the royal house. Everybody knows that the widow of Charles-Edward, when married a second time to Alfieri, called herself Countess of Albany.

[4] This seems to refer to a vow which he is said to have made at the

From the high prow I look over the sea, and great tears are in my grey eye when I turn to Erin—to Erin, where the songs of the birds are so sweet, and where the clerks sing like the birds; where the young are so gentle, and the old so wise; where the great men are so noble to look at, and the women so fair to wed. Young traveller, carry my sorrows with thee, carry them to Comgall of eternal life. Noble youth, take my prayer with thee, and my blessing; one part for Ireland—seven times may she be blessed! and the other for Albyn. Carry my blessing across the sea—carry it to the west. My heart is broken in my breast: if death comes to me suddenly, it will be because of the great love I bear to the Gael." [1]

But it was not only in these elegies, repeated and perhaps retouched by Irish bards and monks, but at each instant of his life, in season and out of season, that this love and passionate longing for his native country burst forth in words

moment of his departure, to see neither man nor woman of his country—a vow which he evaded on his journey to the national assembly of Drum-Ceitt by covering his eyes with a bandage, over which he drew his cowl.—REEVES.

[1] The *Gaoidhil* or *Gaëdhil*. This was the name which the Irish gave themselves before the Roman missionaries had given them the name of *Scoti*. It is generally argued that the best known and most authentic, though in our opinion the least interesting, of Columba's Latin poems, dates from the first years of his sojourn at Iona. It is called by the name of *Altus*, from the first word of the first verse—

"Altus prosator vetustus dierum et ingenitus."

It is composed of twenty-four stanzas. The first word of each verse begins with a different letter, in the order of the letters of the alphabet. Each verse comments in very imaginative language on a text of Scripture, indicated in the argument, on such subjects as the Creation, the Fall, Hell, the Last Judgment, &c. The argument (in Irish) of this poem expressly states that it was suggested to Columba by his desire to obtain the pardon of God for his three battles. The text has been published by Colgan. Dr. Todd announces a more complete edition. Colgan states formally that the poem was composed at Iona. He adds that, according to some, the saint occupied some years in meditation on the subject before he wrote it; and that, according to others, he sent it to Pope Gregory the Great, who received it with the most sympathetic respect.

and in musings; the narratives of his most trustworthy biographers are full of it. The most severe penance which he could imagine for the guiltiest sinners who came to confess to him, was to impose upon them the same fate which he had voluntarily inflicted upon himself—never to set foot again upon Irish soil.[1] But when, instead of forbidding to sinners all access to that beloved isle, he had to smother his envy of those who had the right and happiness to go there at their pleasure, he dared scarcely trust himself to name its name; and when speaking to his guests, or to the monks who were to return to Ireland, he could only say to them, "You will return to the country that you love."[2]

This melancholy patriotism never faded out of his heart, and was evidenced much later in his life by an incident which shows an obstinate regret for his lost Ireland, along with a tender and careful solicitude for all the creatures of God. One morning he called one of the monks and said to him, "Go and seat thyself by the sea, upon the western bank of the island; there thou wilt see arrive from the north of Ireland and fall at thy feet a poor travelling stork, long beaten by the winds and exhausted by fatigue. Take her up with pity, feed her and watch her for three days; after three days' rest, when she is refreshed and strengthened, she will no longer wish to prolong her exile among us—she will fly to sweet Ireland, her dear country where she was born. I bid thee care for her thus, because she comes from the land where I, too, was born." Everything happened as he had said and ordered. The evening of the day on which the monk had received the poor traveller, as he returned to the monastery, Columba, asking him no questions, said to him, "God bless thee, my dear child, thou hast cared for the exile; in three days thou shalt see her return to her country." And, in fact, at the time mentioned the stork rose from the

[1] See further on an incident related by Adamnan, i. 22.

[2] "In tua quam amas patria . . . per multos eris annos."—ADAMN., i. 17.

ground in her host's presence, and, after having sought her way for a moment in the air, directed her flight across the sea, straight upon Ireland.[1] The sailors of the Hebrides all know and tell this tale; and I love to think that among all my readers there is not one who would not fain have repeated or deserved Columba's blessing.

[1] "Nam de aquilonali Hiberniæ regione quædam hospita grus, valde fessa et fatigata, superveniet, coram te in litore cadens recumbet; quam misericorditer sublevare curabis, ad propinquam deportabis domum; et post expleto recreata triduo, nolens ultra apud nos peregrinari, ad priorem Scotiæ dulcem, unde orta, remeabit regionem . . . quam ideo tibi sic diligenter commendo, quia de nostræ paternitatis regione est oriunda. . . . Benedicat te Deus, mi fili, quia peregrinæ bene ministrasti hospitæ . . . quæ post ternos soles ad patriam repedabit . . . paulisperque in aere viam speculata . . . recti volatus cursu ad Hiberniam se repedavit tranquillo."—ADAMN., i. 48.

CHAPTER III

THE APOSTOLATE OF COLUMBA AMONG THE SCOTS AND PICTS

Moral transformation of Columba.—His progress in spiritual life.—His humility.—His charity.— His preaching by tears.— The hut which formed his abbatial palace at Iona.—His prayers; his work of transcription.—His crowd of visitors.—His severity in the examination of monastic vocations.—Aïdus the Black, the murderer of Columba's enemy King Diarmid, rejected by the community.—Penance of Libran of the Rushes.—Columba encourages the despairing and unmasks the hypocrites. — Monastic propaganda of Iona; Columba's fifty-three foundations in Scotland.—His relations with the people of Caledonia: First with the colony of Dalriadians from Ireland, whose king was his relative; he enlightens and confirms their imperfect Christianity. —Ambushes laid for his chastity.—His connection with the Picts, who occupied the north of Britain.—The *dorsum Britanniæ*.—Columba their first missionary.—The fortress gates of their king Brudus open before him.—He struggles with the Druids in their last refuge.—He preaches by an interpreter.—His respect for natural virtue.—Baptism of two old Pictish chiefs.—Columba's humanity: he redeems an Irish captive.—Frequent journeys among the Picts, whose conversion he accomplishes before he dies.—His fellow-workers, Malruve and Drostan; the Monastery of Tears.

However bitter the sadness might be with which exile filled the heart of Columba, it did not for a moment turn him from his work of expiation. As soon as he had installed himself with his companions in that desert isle, from whence the Christian faith and monastic life were about to radiate over the north of Great Britain, a gradual and almost complete transformation became apparent in him. Without giving up the lovable peculiarities of his character and race, he gradually became a model for penitents, and at the same

time for confessors and preachers. Without ceasing to maintain an authority which was to increase with years, and which does not seem ever to have been disputed, over the monasteries which he had founded in Ireland, he applied himself at once to establish, on the double basis of manual and intellectual labour, the new insular community which was to be the centre of his future activity. Then he proceeded to unite himself in friendly relations with the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts, whom it was needful to evangelise or confirm in the faith, before thinking of carrying the light of the Gospel further off to the north. He prepared himself for this grand mission by miracles of fervour and austerity, as well as humble charity, to the great profit in the first place of his own monks, and afterwards of the many visitors who came, whether from Ireland or from the Caledonian shores, to seek at his side the healing or the consolation of penitence.

This man, whom we have seen so passionate, so irritable, so warlike and vindictive, became little by little the most gentle, the humblest, the most tender of friends and fathers. It was he, the great head of the Caledonian Church, who, kneeling before the strangers who came to Iona, or before the monks returning from their work, took off their shoes, washed their feet, and after having washed them respectfully kissed them. But charity was still stronger than humility in that transfigured soul. No necessity, spiritual or temporal, found him indifferent. He devoted himself to the solace of all infirmities, all misery, and pain, weeping often over those who did not weep for themselves.[1] These tears became the most eloquent part of his preaching, the means which he employed most willingly to subdue inveterate sinners, to arrest the criminal on the brink of the abyss, to appease

[1] "Cum laborantibus laborabat, cum infirmantibus infirmabatur, cum flentibus semper, et cum non flentibus sæpe flebat. . . . Quando vel pervicaces in nefarium aliquod facimus ruentes cohibere not poterat . . . lacrymas ubertim emittebat."—O'DONNELL, lib. iii. c. 40.

and soften and change those wild and savage but simple and straightforward souls, whom God had given him to subdue.

In the midst of the new community Columba inhabited, instead of a cell, a sort of hut built of planks, and placed upon the most elevated spot within the monastic enclosure. Up to the age of seventy-six he slept there upon the hard floor, with no pillow but a stone. This hut was at once his study and his oratory. It was there that he gave himself up to those prolonged prayers which excited the admiration and almost the alarm of his disciples. It was there that he returned after sharing the outdoor labour of his monks,[1] like the least among them, to consecrate the rest of his time to the study of Holy Scripture and the transcription of the sacred text. The work of transcription remained until his last day the occupation of his old age as it had been the passion of his youth ; it had such an attraction for him, and seemed to him so essential to a knowledge of the truth, that, as we have already said, three hundred copies of the Holy Gospels, copied by his own hand, have been attributed to him. It was in the same hut that he received with unwearied patience the numerous and sometimes importunate visitors who soon flowed to him, and of whom sometimes he complained gently—as of that indiscreet stranger, who, desirous of embracing him, awkwardly overturned his ink upon the border of his robe.[2] These importunate guests did not come out of simple curiosity ; they were most commonly penitent or fervid Christians, who, informed by the fishermen and inhabitants of the neighbouring isles of the establishment of the Irish monk, who was already famous in his own country, and attracted by the growing renown of his virtues, came from Ireland, from the

[1] "Nullum horæ momentulum transibat, quo non pie occupatum reperiri potuerit. . . . In manuali laboratione cum aliis fratribus non secus ac eorum minimus, collaborabat."—O'DONNELL, *Vita quinta*, iii. 37, 39.

[2] " Tuguriolum hospitiolum, in eminentiore loco fabricatum, in quo vir beatus scribebat. . . . Hospes molestus supervenit, sanctumque osculandum appetens, ora vestimenti inclinatum effudit atramenti corniculum."—ADAMNAN, i. 25.

north and south of Britain, and even from the midst of the still heathen Saxons, to save their souls and gain heaven under the direction of a man of God.[1]

Far from making efforts to attract or lightly admitting these neophytes, nothing in his life is more clearly established than the scrupulous severity with which he examined into all vocations, and into the admission of penitents. He feared nothing so much as that the monastic frock might serve as a shelter for criminals who sought in the cloister not only a place of penitence and expiation, but a shelter from human justice. On occasion he even blamed the too great facility of his friends and disciples. One of the latter, Finchan, had founded upon Eigg,[2] another Hebridean island, a community resembling that of Iona, and possibly dependent upon it: he had there admitted to clerical orders, and even to the priesthood, a prince of the clan of Picts established in Ireland, Aëdh or Aïdus, called the Black, a violent and bloodthirsty man, who had assassinated Diarmid, the king of Ireland. It was this king, as will be remembered, who pronounced the unjust sentence which drove Columba frantic, and was the occasion of all his faults and misfortunes. The abbot of Iona was not the less on this account indignant at the weakness of his friend. "The hand which Finchan has laid, in the face of all justice and ecclesiastical law, upon the head of this son of perdition," said Columba, "shall rot and fall off, and be buried before the body to which it is attached. As for the false priest, the assassin, he shall himself be assassinated." This double prophecy was accomplished.[3]

[1] Adamnan has among the list of the first companions of the holy abbot the names of two Saxons, one of whom was a baker, and also that of a Briton, who died first of all the Iona monks. This was that Odhran or Orain who has left his name to the burying-ground, which is still called *Reilig Orain*. "Bonis actibus intentans qui primus apud nos in hac insula mortuus est."—ADAMNAN, iii. 6.

[2] To the north of Iona, near the large island of Skye.

[3] "Finchanus, Christi miles, Aïdum . . . regio genere ortum, Cruthinium

Let us lend an ear to the following dialogue which Columba held with one of those who sought shelter under his discipline. It will explain the moral and spiritual condition of that age better than many commentaries, and will, besides, show the wonderful influence which Columba, penitent and exiled in the depths of his distant island, exercised over all Ireland. It was one day announced to him that a stranger had just landed from Ireland, and Columba went to meet him in the house reserved for guests, to talk to him in private, and question him as to his dwelling-place, his family, and the cause of his journey. The stranger told him that he had undertaken this painful voyage in order, under the monastic habit and in exile, to expiate his sins. Columba, desirous of trying the reality of his penitence, drew a most repulsive picture of the hardship and difficult obligations of the new life. "I am ready," said the stranger, "to submit to the most cruel and humiliating conditions that thou canst command me." And after having made confession, he swore, still upon his knees, to accomplish all the requirements of penitence. "It is well," said the abbot; "now rise from thy knees, seat thyself and listen: you must first do penance for seven years in the neighbouring island of Tiree, after which I will see you again." "But," said the penitent, still agitated by remorse, "how can I expiate a perjury of which I have not yet spoken? Before I left my own country I killed a poor man. I was about to suffer the punishment of death for that crime, and I was already in irons, when one of my relations, who is very rich, delivered me by paying the composition demanded. I swore that I would serve him all the rest of my life; but after some days of service I abandoned him, and here I am, notwithstanding my oath." Upon this the saint added that he

gente, de Scotia ad Britanniam sub clericatus habitu secum adduxit. . . . Qui valde sanguinarius homo et multorum fuerat trucidator. . . . Darmitium totæ Scotiæ regnatorem Deo auctore ordinatum interfecerat. . . . Manus . . . contra fas et jus ecclesiasticum super caput filii perditionis, mox computrescet."—ADAMNAN, i. 36.

would only be admitted to the paschal communion after seven years of penitence. When these were completed, Columba, after having given him the communion with his own hand, sent him back to Ireland to his patron, carrying a sword with an ivory handle for his ransom. The patron, however, moved by the entreaties of his wife, gave the penitent his pardon without ransom. "Why should we accept the price sent to us by the holy Columba? We are not worthy of it. The request of such an intercessor should be granted freely. His blessing will do more for us than any ransom." And immediately he detached the girdle from his waist, which was the ordinary formula in Ireland for the manumission of captives or slaves. Columba had besides commanded his penitent to remain with his old father and mother until he had rendered to them the last services. This accomplished, his brothers let him go, saying, "Far be it from us to detain a man who has laboured for seven years for the salvation of his soul with the holy Columba." He then returned to Iona, bringing with him the sword which was to have been his ransom. "Henceforward thou shalt be called Libran, for thou art free, and emancipated from all ties," said Columba; and he immediately admitted him to take the monastic vows. But when he was commanded to return to Tiree, to end his life at a distance from Columba, poor Libran, who up to this moment had been so docile, fell on his knees and wept bitterly. Columba, touched by his despair, comforted him as best he could, without, however, altering his sentence. "Thou shalt live far from me, but thou shalt die in one of my monasteries, and thou shalt rise again with my monks, and have part with them in heaven," said the abbot. Such was the history of Libran, called Libran of the Rushes, because he had passed many years in gathering rushes—the years probably of his penitence.[1]

[1] "Libranus de *Arundineto* . . . plebeius nuper, sumpto clericatus habitu . . . ad delenda in peregrinatione peccamina longo fatigatum itinere. . . . Cui sanctus, ut de suæ pœnitudinis exploraret qualitate, dura et laboriosa

This doctor, learned in penitence, became day by day more gifted in the great art of ruling souls; and, with a hand as prudent as vigorous, raised up on one side the wounded and troubled conscience—while, on the other, he unveiled the false monks and false penitents. To a certain monk, who, in despair at having yielded during a journey to the temptations of a woman, rushed from confessor to confessor without ever finding himself sufficiently repentant or sufficiently punished, he restored peace and confidence, by showing him that his despair was nothing but an infernal hallucination, and by inflicting upon him a penance hard enough to convince him of the remission of his sin.[1] To another sinner from Ireland, who, guilty of incest and fratricide, had insisted, whether Columba pleased or not, on taking refuge in Iona, he imposed perpetual exile from his native country, and twelve years of penance among the savages of Caledonia, predicting at the same time that the false penitent would perish in consequence of refusing this expiation.[2] Arriving one day in a little community formed

ante oculos monasterialia proposuisset imperia. . . . Paratus sum ad omnia quæcumque mihi jubere volueris, quamlibet durissima, quamlibet indigna. . . . Surge et reside. . . . Quid agere oportet de quodam meo falso juramento? Nam in patria trucidavi homuncionem. . . . Machæram belluinis ornatam dolatis dentibus. . . . Ut quid nobis hoc accipere quod sanctus pretium misit Columba? Hoc non sumus digni . . . liberetur ei pius hic gratis ministrator. . . . Continuo gratis liberavit servum . . . cingulum ex more captivi de lumbis resolvens. . . . Ut tanto tempore patri debitam, sed neglectam redintegres pietatem. . . . Nullo modo nos oportet fratrem in patria retentare qui per septem annos apud S. Columbam in Britannia salutem exercuit animæ. . . . Tu Libranus vocaberis quod sis liber. . . . Qui ideo Arundineti est vocitatus, quia in arundineto multis annis arundines colligendo laboraverat." His death occurred long after that of Columba, at Durrow, one of the first of the great abbot's foundations in Ireland.—ADAMNAN, ii. 39.

[1] "Magna est, o frater, hallucinatio tua. Ego quindecim tibi annos in pane et aqua jejunandos pro pœnitentia injungo, quo tibi vel ipsa pœnitentiæ gravitas persuadeat peccatum tuum esse remissum."—O'DONNELL, vol. i. c. 24.

[2] "Si duodecim annis inter Brittones cum fletu et lachrymis pœnitentiam egeris, nec ad Scotiam usque ad mortem reversus fueris, forsan Deus peccato ignoscat tuo."—ADAMNAN, i. 22.

by himself in one of the neighbouring islets,[1] and intended to receive the penitents during their time of probation, he gave orders that certain delicacies should be added to their usual repast, and that even the penitents should be permitted to enjoy them. One of the latter, however, more scrupulous than needful, refused to accept the improved fare, even from the hand of the abbot. "Ah!" said Columba, "thou refusest the solace which is offered thee by thy superior and myself. A day will come when thou shalt again be a robber as thou hast been, and shalt steal, and eat the venison in the forests wherever thou goest." And this prophecy too was fulfilled.[2]

Notwithstanding these precautions, and his apparent severity, the number of neophytes who sought the privilege of living under the rule of Columba increased more and more. Every day, and every minute of the day, the abbot and his companions, in the retirement of their cells, or at their outdoor labours, heard great cries addressed to them from the other side of the narrow strait which separates Iona from the neighbouring island of Mull. These shouts were the understood signal by which those who sought admission to Iona gave notice of their presence, that the boat of the monastery might be sent to carry them over.[3] Among the crowds who crossed in that boat some sought only material help, alms, or medicines; but the greater part sought permission to do penance, and to pass a shorter

[1] Himba, the modern name of which is unknown.

[2] "Ut etiam pœnitentibus aliqua præcipit consolatio indulgeretur. . . . Erit tempus quo cum furacibus furtive carnem in sylva manducabis."—ADAMNAN, i. 21.

[3] "Alia die, ultra fretum Ionæ insulæ clamatum est, quem sanctus, sedens in tuguriolo tabulis suffulto audiens, clamorem. . . . Mane eadem quarta feria, alius ultra fretum clamitabat proselytus. . . . Quadam die quemdam ultra fretum audiens clamitantem, sanctus. . . . Valde mise randus est ille clamitans homo, qui aliqua ad carnalia medicamenta petiturus pertinentia, ad nos venit. . . . Ite, ait, celeriter peregrinosque de longinqua venientes regione, ad nos ocius adducite."—ADAMNAN, i. 25, 26, 27, 32, 43.

or longer time in the new monastery, where Columba put their vocation to so many trials. Once only was he known to have at the very moment of their arrival imposed, so to speak, the monastic vows upon two pilgrims, whose virtues and approaching death had been by a supernatural instinct revealed to him.[1]

The narrow enclosure of Iona was soon too small for the increasing crowd, and from this little monastic colony issued in succession a swarm of similar colonies, which went forth to plant new communities, daughters of Iona, in the neighbouring isles, and on the mainland of Caledonia, all of which were under the authority of Columba. Ancient traditions attribute to him the foundation of three hundred monasteries or churches, as many in Caledonia as in Hibernia, a hundred of which were in the islands or upon the sea-shore of the two countries. Modern learning has discovered and registered the existence of ninety churches, whose origin goes back to Columba, and to all or almost all of which, according to the custom of the time, monastic communities must have been attached.[2] Traces of fifty-three of these churches remain still in modern Scotland, unequally divided among the districts inhabited by the two races which then shared Caledonia between them.[3] Thirty-two are in the western isles,

[1] "Apud me, ut dicitis, anni unius spatio peregrinari non poteritis, nisi prius monachicum promiseretis votum."—ADAMNAN, i. 32.

[2] Jocelyn, in his *Vie de Saint Patrice*, c. 89, attributes a hundred to him; and this number is increased to three hundred by O'Donnell, book iii. c. 32. Colgan has named sixty-six of which Columba must have been, directly or indirectly, the founder (six more than St. Bernard). Fifty-eight of these foundations were in Ireland. But Colgan regards as founded by him almost all the churches built in Scotland before his death in 597. Bede, iii. 4, seems to give Durrow and Iona as the only direct foundations of Columba, and the others as proceeding from these two: "Ex utroque monasterio plurima exinde monasteria per discipulos et in Britannia et in Scotia propagata sunt." But he evidently is in the wrong, so far at least as Derry is concerned. All the communities erected under the supremacy of the abbot of Iona bore the name of *Familia Columba-Cille.*

[3] The enumeration of Dr. Reeves (Appendix H) might be much aug-

and the country occupied by the Irish-Scots, and the twenty-one others mark the principal stations of the great missionary in the land of the Picts. The most enlightened judges among the Scotch Protestants agree in attributing to the teachings of Columba—to his foundations and his disciples—all the primitive churches, and the very ancient parochial division of Scotland.[1]

But it is time to tell what the population was whose confidence Columba had thus gained, and from which the communities of his monastic family were recruited. The portion of Great Britain which received the name of Caledonia did not include the whole of modern Scotland; it embraced only the districts to the north of the isthmus which separates the Clyde from the Forth, or Glasgow from Edinburgh. All this region to the north and to the east was in the hands of those terrible Picts whom the Romans had been unable to conquer, and who were the terror of the Britons. But to the west and south-west, on the side where Columba landed, he found a colony of his own country and race—that is to say, the Scots of Ireland, who were destined to become the sole masters of Caledonia, and to bestow upon it the name of Scotland.[2]

mented, according to what he himself says. The thirty-two churches or monasteries *inter Scottos* comprehended those of the Hebridean isles, such as Skye, Mull, Oronsay, even down to the distant islet of St. Kilda, one of the three churches of which bears his name. In those *inter Pictos* is included Inchcolm, an island near Edinburgh. These fifty-three, and the thirty-seven already brought to light by Dr. Reeves, make very nearly the number of one hundred given by the author of the *Vie de Saint Patrice.*

[1] See specially Cosmo Innes, the modest and learned author of the excellent works entitled *Scotland in the Middle Ages*, 1860, and *Sketches of Early Scottish History*, 1861.

[2] We again repeat what it required all the learning of Ussher, White, Colgan, and Ward to prove—namely, that the holy and learned Scotia of the ancients was Ireland. The name of Scotia became the exclusive possession of the Scotch—that is to say, of the Irish colonists in Caledonia—only in the eleventh or twelfth century, in the time of Giraldus Cambrensis at the moment when the power of the true Scots declined in Scotland under the influence of the Anglo-Norman conquest. The Bollandists have applied the very appropriate name of *Scotia Nova* or *Hiberno-Scotia* to the Scotic

More than half a century before, following in the train of many similar invasions or emigrations, a colony of Irish, or, according to the name then in use, of Scots, belonging to the tribe of Dalriadians,[1] had crossed the sea which separates the north-east coast of Ireland from the north-west of Great Britain, and had established itself—between the Picts of the north and the Britons of the south—in the islands and upon the western coast of Caledonia, north of the mouth of the Clyde, and in the district which has since taken the name of Argyll. The chiefs or kings of this Dalriadian colony, who were destined to become the parent stock of those famous and unfortunate Stuarts who once reigned over both Scotland and England, had at that time strengthened their growing power by the aid of the Niall princes who reigned in the north of Ireland, and to whose family Columba belonged. Columba had also a very close tie of kindred with the Dalriadians themselves, his paternal grandmother having been the daughter of Lorn, the first, or one of the first kings of the colony.[2] He was thus a relation of King Connal, the sixth successor of Lorn, who, at the moment of Columba's arrival, had been for three years the chief of the Scotic emigrants in Caledonia. Iona, where the abbot established himself,

colonies in Scotland.—*Vita S. Cadroë*, ap. ACT. SS. MARTII, vol. i. p. 473, and *Vita S. Domnani*, ACT. SS. APRILIS, vol. ii. p. 487. The modern English also use a title historically exact in describing as North Britain the kingdom of Scotland since its union with England. M. Varin, in the papers which we have already quoted, has proved the obscurity of the political and religious origin of Caledonia. He remarks that, of the three primitive populations successively noted in that part of Great Britain, the only one which has retained its name is that which was the last to arrive upon the soil, which from it is still called Scotland. He is even disposed to believe that Ireland sometimes claimed for herself the credit of the civil and religious acts accomplished in her colony.

[1] These Dalriadians were themselves descended from Picts, who, under the name of *Cruithne* or *Cruithnii*, had long swayed a part of Ireland.—See REEVES, pp. 33, 67, and 94; O'KELLEY, notes to the new edition of *Cambrensis Eversus*, of Lynch, vol. i. pp. 436, 463, 495. In Columba's time they still occupied the counties of Antrim and Down.

[2] See the genealogical table of REEVES, p. 8, note 4.

was at the northern extremity of the then very limited domain of the Dalriadians, and might be regarded as a dependency of their new state, not less than of that of the Picts, who occupied all the rest of Caledonia. Columba immediately entered into alliance with this prince. He visited him in his residence on the mainland, and obtained from him, in his double title of cousin and countryman, a gift of the uninhabited island where he had just established his community.[1]

These Scots who had left Ireland after the conversion of the island by St. Patrick were probably Christians, like all the Irish, at least in name; but no certain trace of ecclesiastical organisation or of monastic institutions is visible among them before Columba's arrival at Iona. The apostolate of Ninian and of Palladius does not seem to have produced a durable impression upon them any more than upon the southern Picts.[2] A new apostolical enterprise by Celtic monks was necessary to renew the work at which the Roman missionaries had laboured a century before.[3] Columba and his disciples neglected no means of fortifying and spreading religion among their countrymen, who were emigrants like themselves. We see him in the narratives of Adamnan administering baptism and the other rites of religion to the people of Scotic race, through whose lands he passed, planting there the first foundations of monastic communities. Many narratives, more or less legendary, indicate that this people, even when Christian, had great need to be instructed, directed, and established in the good way; while at the same time the Dalriadians showed a certain suspicion and doubt of the new apostle of their race, which only yielded to the

[1] TIGHERNACH, *Annales;* ADAMNAN, 574, i. 7.

[2] This explains the name of *apostates* given by St. Patrick to the Scots and Picts of his time—"Socii Scotorum atque Pictorum apostatarum . . . pessimorum atque apostatarum Pictorum."

[3] The Irish Scots, newly converted, reconquered to Christianity the Scots of Caledonia. The Picts, forgetful of Ninian and of Rome, received the gospel the second time from Hibernia in the name of Britain.—VARIN, 2nd paper.

prolonged influence of his self-devotion and unquestionable virtue.

Columba was still in the flower of his age when he established himself at Iona; he was not more at the most than forty-two. All testimonies agree in celebrating his manly beauty, his remarkable height, his sweet and sonorous voice, the cordiality of his manner, the gracious dignity of his deportment and person.[1] These external advantages, added to the fame of his austerities and the inviolable purity of his life, made a singular and varied impression upon the pagans and the very imperfect Christians of Caledonia. The Dalriadian king put his virtue to the proof by presenting to him his daughter, who was remarkably beautiful, and clothed in the richest ornaments. He asked if the sight of a creature so beautiful and so adorned did not excite some inclination in him. "Without doubt," answered the missionary, "the inclination of the flesh and of nature; but understand well, lord king, that not for all the empire of the world, even could its honours and pleasures be secured to me to the end of time, would I yield to my natural weakness."[2] About the same

[1] "Erat aspectu angelicus. . . . Omnibus carus, hilarem semper faciem ostendens . . . cujus alta proceritas. . . ."—ADAMN., *Præf.*, and i. 1. "Vir tantæ deditus austeritati . . . tamen exteriori forma et corporis habitu speciosus, genis rubicundus et vultu hilaris . . . semper apparebat et omnibus. . . . Colloquio affabilem, benignum, jucundum et interior is lætitiæa Spiritu Sancto infusæ indicia, hilari vultu prodentem se semper exhibebat." —O'DONNELL, *Vita quinta*, l. iii. c. 43.

[2] "Puellam valde speciosam purpura, auro, gemmis, aliisque id generis regii amictus ornamentis . . . exornatam . . . coram S. Columba sistit. . . . Percontatus an filiæ et pulchritudo et ornatus placeant. Respondit sanctus omnino placere. Iterum compellat an non etiam ejus formæ ducatur complacentia. . . . Respondit se natura ad talem complacentiam propensum esse. Ecce, inquit rex . . . hiccine est qui nullo carnali desiderio inquinatus deprædicatur? Tunc S. Columba . . . O rex, sciat altitudo tua, et si insita carnis propensio meam naturam ad prohibitas inclinet complacentias, pro universi tamen imperio, honoribus et voluptatibus, si usque mundi finem ad concederetur, me nolle talibus complacenter indulgere."—O'DONNELL, lib. ii. c. 39. The king who figures in this anecdote does not appear to have been Aïdan, as O'Donnell would assert. Aïdan began to reign over the Scotic colony only in 574, eleven years after the arrival of Columba at Iona. It must have been his predecessor Connell.

time, a woman who lived not far from Iona spread for him a more dangerous and subtle snare. The celebrated and handsome exile having inspired her with a violent and guilty passion, she conceived the idea of seducing him, and succeeded in drawing him to her house. But as soon as he understood her design, he addressed to her an exhortation upon death and the last judgment, which he ended by blessing her, and making the sign of the cross. The temptress was thus delivered even from her own temptations. She continued to love him, but with a religious respect. It is added that she herself became a model of holiness.[1]

But it was towards another race, very different from his Scotic countrymen and much less accessible, that Columba felt himself drawn as much by the penance imposed upon him as by the necessities of the Church and of Christendom. While the Irish Scots occupied the islands and part of the western coast of Caledonia, all the north and east—that is to say, by far the greater part of the country—was inhabited by the Picts, who were still heathens. Originally from Sarmatia, according to Tacitus—according to Bede, descendants of the Scythians—these primitive inhabitants of Great Britain, who had remained untouched by Roman or Christian influences, owed their name to their custom of fighting naked, and of painting their bodies in various colours, which had been the wont of all the ancient Britons at the time of Cæsar's invasion. We have already seen that the holy bishop Ninian more than a century before had preached the Christian faith to the Southern Picts[2]—that is to say, to those who lived on the banks of the Forth or scattered among the Britons in the districts south of that river. But while even the traces of Ninian's apostolic work seemed at

[1] "Ipsum in Ionam jam commorantem, multisque . . . percelebrem. . . . Quamdam de vicino feminam S. viri concupiscentia inflammat (antiquus serpens). . . . Deinde eam aucto crucis signo benedicens, ab omni mox tentatione liberam dimisit. . . . Casto deinceps amore, magnaque reverentia coluit, ipsa tandem sanctitate celebris."—O'DONNELL, lib. ii. c. 25.

[2] Book viii. chap. 1.

that moment effaced, although destined afterwards to reappear, the great majority of the Picts—those who inhabited the vast tracts to the north of the Grampians, into which no missionary before Columba had ever dared to penetrate[1]—had always continued heathen. The thirty-four years of life which Columba had still before him were chiefly spent in missions, undertaken for the purpose of carrying the faith to the hilly straths, and into the deep glens and numerous islands of northern Caledonia. There dwelt a race, warlike, grasping, and bold, as inaccessible to softness as to fear, only half clothed notwithstanding the severity of the climate, and obstinately attached to their customs, belief, and chiefs. The missionary had to preach, to convert, and even at need to brave those formidable tribes, in whom Tacitus recognised the farthest off of the earth's inhabitants, and the last champions of freedom—"*terrarum ac libertatis extremos;*" those barbarians who, having gloriously resisted Agricola, drove the frightened Romans from Britain, and devastated and desolated the entire island up to the arrival of the Saxons; and whose descendants, after filling the history of Scotland with their feats of arms, have given, under the name of *Highlanders*, to the fallen Stuarts their most dauntless defenders, and to modern England her most glorious soldiers.

Columba crossed again and again that central mountain-range in which rise those waters which flow, some north and west to fall into the Atlantic Ocean, and some to the south to swell the North Sea—a range which the biographer of the saint calls the backbone of Britain (*dorsum Britanniæ*), and which separates the counties of Inverness and Argyll, as now existing, from the county of Perth, and includes the districts so well known to travellers under the names of Breadalbane, Atholl, and the Grampians. This was the

[1] "Primus doctor fidei Christianæ transmontanis Pictis ad Aquilonem." —Bede, v. 9. "Gentem illam verbo et exemplo ad fidem Christi convertit."—*Ibid.*, iii. 4.

recognised boundary between the Scots and Picts,[1] and it was here that the ancestors of the latter, the heroic soldiers of Galgacus, had held their ground against the father-in-law of Tacitus, who even when victorious did not venture to cross that barrier.[2] Often, too, Columba followed the course of that long valley of waters which, to the north of these mountains, traverses Scotland diagonally from the south-west, near Iona, to the north-east beyond Inverness. This valley is formed by a series of long gulfs and of inland lakes which modern industry has linked together, making it possible for boats to pass from one sea to the other without making the long round by the Orcadian Isles. Thirteen centuries ago religion alone could undertake the conquest of those wild and picturesque regions, which a scanty but fierce and suspicious population disputed with the fir-forests and vast tracts of fern and heather, which are still to be encountered there.

The first glance thrown by history upon this watery highway discovers there the preaching and miracles of Columba. He was the first to traverse in his little skiff Loch Ness and the river which issues from it; he penetrated thus, after a long and painful journey, to the principal fortress of the Pictish king, the site of which is still shown upon a rock north of the town of Inverness. This powerful and redoubtable monarch, whose name was Bruidh, or Brude, son of Malcolm, gave at first a very inhospitable reception to the Irish missionary. The companions of the saint relate that, priding himself upon the royal magnificence of his

[1] Such at least is the assertion of Adamnan, ii. 46. But his contemporary Bede and all modern authors give another frontier. According to the latter, the Scots extended through all the west of the Caledonian peninsula, and the Southern Picts occupied, to the south of the Grampians, the counties of Perth, Forfar, and Fife. See the map of Scotland in the eleventh century, in the *Sketches of Early Scotch History*, by Cosmo Innes. "Prædicaturus verbum Dei provinciis septentrionalium Pictorum, hoc est, eis quæ arduis atque horrentibus montium jugis ab australibus eorum sunt regionibus sequestratæ.—BEDE, iii. 4.

[2] WALTER SCOTT, *History of Scotland*, c. 1.

fortress, he gave orders that the gates should not be opened to the unwelcome visitor; but this was not a command to alarm Columba. He went up to the gateway, made the sign of the cross upon the two gates, and then knocked with his hand. Immediately the bars and bolts drew back, the gates rolled upon their hinges and were thrown wide open, and Columba entered like a conqueror. The king, though surrounded by his council, among whom no doubt were his heathen priests, was struck with panic; he hastened to meet the missionary, addressed to him pacific and encouraging words, and from that moment gave him every honour.[1] It is not recorded whether Bruidh himself became a Christian, but during all the rest of his life he remained the friend and protector of Columba. He confirmed to him the possession of Iona, the sovereignty of which he seems to have disputed with his rival the king of the Dalriadian Scots, and our exile thus saw his establishment placed under the double protection of the two powers which shared Caledonia between them.[2]

But the favour of the king did not bring with it that of the heathen priests, who are indicated by the Christian historians under the name of Druids or Magi, and who

[1] "Bridio rege potentissimo."—BEDE, iii. 4. "In prima sancti fatigatione itineris ad regem Brudeum . . . ex fastu elatus regio munitionis suæ superbe agens . . . homo Dei, cum comitibus, ad valvas portarum accedens . . . tunc manum pulsans contra ostia, quæ continuo sponte, retro retrusis fortiter seris, cum omni celeritate aperta sunt. Rex cum senatu valde pertimescunt."—ADAMN., i. c. 35. It is supposed that this royal fortress occupied the site of the vitrified fort of *Craig Pharrick*, on a rock 1200 feet above the Ness, near its embouchure into the Moray Firth. These *vitrified* walls—that is to say, walls the stones of which have been dipped, instead of cement, into a vitreous substance produced by the action of fire—are to be found in some districts of Brittany and of Maine, and are everywhere imputed to the Celtic period.

[2] "Quæ videlicet insula ad jus quidem Britanniæ pertinet, sed donatione Pictorum qui illas Britanniæ plagas incolunt, jamdudum monachis Scotorum tradita, eo quod illis prædicantibus fidem Christi perceperint. . . . Unde et Columba . . . præfatam insulam ab eis in possessionem monasterii faciendi accepit."—BEDE, iii. 3, 4. Compare Reeves, p. 76.

made an energetic and persevering resistance to the new apostle. These priests do not seem either to have taught or practised the worship of idols, but rather that of natural forces, and especially of the sun and other celestial bodies. They followed or met the Irish preacher in his apostolic journeys, less to refute his arguments than to hold back and intimidate those whom his preaching gained to Christ. The religious and supernatural character which was attributed by the Druids of Gaul to the woods and ancient trees, was attached by those of Caledonia to the streams and fountains, some of which were, according to their belief, salutary and beneficial, while others were deadly to man. Columba made special efforts to forbid among the new Christians the worship of sacred fountains, and, braving the threats of the Druids, drank in their presence the water which they affirmed would kill any man who dared to put it to his lips.[1] But they used no actual violence against the stranger whom their prince had taken under his protection. One day, when Columba and his monks came out of the enclosure of the fort in which the king resided, to chant vespers according to the monastic custom, the Druids attempted to prevent them from singing, lest the sound of the religious chants should reach the people; but the abbot instantly intoned the sixty-fourth psalm, "*Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum: dico opera mea regi,*" with so formidable a voice, that he reduced his adversaries to silence, and made the surrounding spectators, and even the king himself, tremble before him.[2]

But he did not confine himself to chanting in Latin; he preached. The dialect of the Picts, however, being different from that of the Scots, and unknown to him, it was necessary to employ the services of an interpreter.[3] But his

[1] ADAMNAN, ii. 2.

[2] "Dum cum paucis fratribus extra regis munitionem vespertinales Dei laudes ex more celebraret, quidam Magi."

[3] "Verbum vitæ per interpretatorem sancto prædicante viro."—ADAMN.,

words were not the less efficacious on this account, though everywhere he was met by the rival exhortations or derisions of the pagan priests. His impassioned nature, as ready to love as to hate, made itself as apparent in his apostolic preachings as formerly in the struggles of his youth; and ties of tender intimacy, active and never appealed to in vain, were soon formed between himself and his converts. One of the Picts, who, having heard him preach by his interpreter, was converted with his wife and all his family, became his friend, and received many visits from him. One of the sons of this new convert fell dangerously ill; the Druids profited by the misfortune to reproach the anxious parents, making it appear that the sickness of their child was the punishment of their apostasy, and boasting the power of the ancient gods of the country, as superior to that of the Christians' God. Columba having been informed hastened to his friend's aid: when he arrived the child had just expired. As soon as he had done all that in him lay to console the father and mother, he asked to be allowed to enter alone into the place where the body of the child was. There he kneeled down and prayed long, bathed in tears; then rising, he said, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, return to life and arise!" At the same moment the soul came back to the child's body. Columba helped him to rise, supported him, let him out of the cabin, and restored him to his parents. The power of prayer was thus as great, says Adamnan, in our saint as in Elijah and Elisha under the old law, or in St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John under the new.[1]

ii. 32. Bede states that there were five different languages spoken in Great Britain, and compares them with the five books of the Pentateuch. "Anglorum videlicet" (that is to say, the Anglo-Saxons), "Britonum, Scottorum, Pictorum et Latinorum quæ meditatione Scripturarum cæteris omnibus est facta communis."—*Hist. Eccl.*, i. 1. This text, which is so important for the history of philology, is not less important as a proof to what point the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures had already spread among the Catholic nations.

[1] "Quidam plebeius" (this term is always used by Adamnan to express

While thus preaching faith and the grace of God by the voice of an interpreter, he at the same time recognised, admired, and proclaimed among those savage tribes the lights and virtues of the law of nature. He discovered the rays of its radiance in many an unknown hearer, by the help of that supernatural gift which enabled him to read the secrets of the heart, and to penetrate the darkness of the future; a gift which developed itself more and more in him as his apostolical career went on. One day while labouring in his evangelical work in the principal island of the Hebrides, the one which lies nearest to the mainland,[1] he cried out all at once, "My sons, to-day you will see an ancient Pictish chief, who has kept faithfully all his life the precepts of the natural law, arrive in this island; he comes to be baptized and to die." Immediately after, a boat was seen to approach the shore with a feeble old man seated in the prow, who was recognised as the chief of one of the neighbouring tribes. Two of his companions took him up in their arms and brought him before the missionary, to whose words, as repeated by the interpreter, he listened attentively. When the discourse was ended the old man asked to be baptized; and immediately after breathed his last breath, and was buried in the very spot where he had just been brought to shore.[2]

At a later date, in one of his last missions, when, himself

a layman, but at the same time a man either rich or of consideration). . . . "Magi parentibus sæpe cum magna exprobratione cœperunt illudere, suosque quasi fortiores magnificare deos, Christianorum Deo quasi infirmiori derogare. . . . Hoc noster Columba cum Elia et Eliseo. . . . Petro et Paulo et Joanni . . . habebat sibi commune virtutis miraculum."—ADAMNAN, ii. 32.

[1] Skye, the same in which Charles-Edward took refuge in 1746, after the defeat of Culloden, and where he met Flora Macdonald.

[2] "O filii, hodie in hac terrula quidam gentilis senex naturale per totam bonum custodiens vitam, et baptizabitur et morietur. . . . Navicula cujus in prora advectus est decrepitus senex Geonæ primarius cohortis, quem bini juvenes de navi sublevantes, ante beati conspectum viri deponunt . . . Verbo Dei a sancto per interpretem recepto. . . ."—ADAMNAN, i. 33.

an old man, he travelled along the banks of Loch Ness, always in the district to the north of the mountain-range of the *dorsum Britanniæ*, he said to the disciples who accompanied him, "Let us make haste and meet the angels who have come down from heaven, and who await for us beside a Pict who has done well according to the natural law during his whole life to extreme old age: we must baptize him before he dies." Then hastening his steps and outstripping his disciples, as much as was possible at his great age, he reached a retired valley, now called Glen Urquhart, where he found the old man who awaited him. Here there was no longer any need of an interpreter, which makes it probable that Columba in his old age had learned the Pictish dialect. The old Pict heard him preach, was baptized, and with joyful serenity gave up to God the soul which was awaited by those angels whom Columba saw.[1]

In this generous heart humanity claimed its rights no less than justice. It was in the name of humanity,[2] his biographer expressly tells us, that he begged the freedom of a young female slave, born in Ireland, and the captive of one of the principal Druids or Magi. This Druid was named Broïchan, and lived with the king, whose foster-father[3] he

[1] "Ultra Britanniæ dorsum iter agens. . . . Properemus sanctis obviam angelis qui de cœlis ad præferendam alicujus gentilici animam emissi nos illuc expectant, ut ipsum naturale bonum per totam vitam usque ad extremam senectutem conservantem, priusquam moriatur, opportune baptizemus. . . . Sanctus senex in quantum potuit comites festinus præcedebat . . . et credens baptizatus est et continuo lætus et securus, cum angelis observantibus, ad Deum commigravit."—ADAMNAN, iii. 14.

[2] "Scoticam postulavit servam . . . humanitatis miseratione liberandam."—*Ibid.*, ii. 33.

[3] The reciprocal duties of foster fathers and children (fosterage) were minutely regulated by the British laws.

In the twelfth century, Giraldus Cambrensis still remarked that among the Irish, foster brothers and sisters were united by a tie almost stronger and more tender than brothers and sisters of the same blood. Dr. Lynch, in his *Cambrensis Eversus* (first published in 1662, and re-edited by Prof. Kelly in 1850), enlarges upon the importance of the tie which united the Irish princes and lords to their foster fathers and brothers. He recalls

was, a tie of singular force and authority among the Celtic nations. Either from a savage pride, or out of enmity to the new religion, the Druid obstinately and cruelly refused the prayer of Columba. "Be it so," said the apostle; "but learn, Broïchan, that if thou refusest to set free this foreign captive, thou shalt die before I leave the province." When he had said this he left the castle, directing his steps towards that river Ness which appears so often in his history. But he was soon overtaken by two horsemen who came from the king to tell him that Broïchan, the victim of an accident, was dying, and fully disposed to set the young Irish girl free. The saint took up from the river bank a pebble, which he blessed, and gave to two of his monks, with the assurance that the sick man would be healed by drinking water in which this stone had been steeped, but only on the express condition that the captive should be delivered. She was immediately put under the charge of Columba's companions, and was thus restored at the same moment to her country and her freedom.[1]

The Druid, though healed, was not thereby rendered less hostile to the apostle. Like the magicians of Pharaoh, he attempted to raise nature and her forces against the new Moses. On the day fixed for his departure, Columba found, on reaching, followed by a numerous crowd, the banks of the long and narrow lake from which the Ness issues, and by which he meant to travel, a strong contrary wind and thick fog, as Broïchan had threatened, which the Druids

Mordecai the foster-father of Esther, and Clitus, the foster-brother of Alexander the Great, among many examples of sacred and profane history which support his idea. His new editor asserts (ii. 141, 162) that at the Council of Trent the Irish Bishop of Raphoe, Donald MacCongal, demonstrated that *fosterage* and *gossipred* (cognatio spiritualis) were the principal safeguard of the public peace in Ireland.

[1] "Scito, Broichane, scito quia si mihi hanc peregrinam liberare captivam nolueris, priusquam de hac revertar provincia, citius morieris. . . . Nunc formidabiliter correptus ancillulam liberare est paratus . . . eademque hora liberata famula sancti legatis viri assignatur."—ADAMNAN, ii. 33.

exulted to see. But Columba, entering his boat, bade the frightened rowers set the sail against the wind, and the assembled people saw him proceed rapidly on his course, as if borne by favourable breezes, towards the south end of the lake, by which he returned to Iona. But he left only to make a speedy return, and came so often as to accomplish the conversion of the Pictish nation, by destroying for ever the authority of the Druids in this last refuge of Celtic paganism.[1] This sanguinary and untamable race was finally conquered by the Irish missionary. Before he ended his glorious career he had sown their forests, their defiles, their inaccessible mountains, their savage moors, and scarcely inhabited islands, with churches and monasteries.

Columba's assistants, in his numerous missions among the Picts, were the monks who had come with him, or who had followed him from Ireland. The fame of the obscure benefactors and civilisers of so distant a region has still more completely disappeared than that of Columba: it is with difficulty that some lingering trace of them is to be disentangled from the traditions of some churches whose sites may yet be found upon the ancient maps of Scotland. Such was Malruve (642–722[2]), a kinsman of Columba, and like him descended from the royal race of Niall, but educated in the great monastery of Bangor, which he left to follow his illustrious cousin into Albyn, passing by Iona. He must have long survived Columba, for he was for fifty-one years abbot of a community at Apercrossan,[3] upon the north-west coast of Caledonia, opposite the large island of

[1] "Ventum tibi contrarium caliginemque umbrosam superinducam. . . . Christum invocat, cymbulamque ascendens nautis hæsitantibus, ipse constanter factus velum contra ventum jubet subrigi . . . omnique inspectante turba, navigium flatus contra adversos mira occurrit velocitate."—ADAMNAN, ii. 34. The place where he landed is at present occupied by Fort-Augustus, at the commencement of the Caledonian Canal.

[2] W. REEVES, *St. Maelrubha, his History and Churches.* Edinburgh, 1861. Compare *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. vi. August, p. 132.

[3] At present Applecross. Twenty-one parishes in the north of Scotland were in primitive times dedicated to this saint.

Skye, before he met his death, which was, according to local tradition, by the sword of Norwegian pirates.

Upon the opposite shore, in that striking promontory which forms the eastern extremity of Scotland, a district now known as Buchan, various churches trace their origin to Columba, and to one of his Irish disciples called Drostan. The *mor-maer* or chief of the country had at first refused them his permission to settle there, but his son fell dangerously ill, and he hastened after the missionaries, offering them the land necessary for their foundation, and begging them to pray for the dying boy. They prayed, and the child was saved. After having blessed the new church, and predicted that none who profaned it should ever conquer their enemies or enjoy long life, Columba installed his companions in their new home, and himself turned to continue his journey. When Drostan saw himself thus condemned to live at a distance from his master, he could not restrain his tears; for these old saints, in their wild and laborious career, loved each other with a passionate tenderness, which is certainly not the least touching feature in their character, and which places an inextinguishable light upon their heads amid the darkness of the legends. "Then," Columba said, "let us call this place the Monastery of Tears;"[1] and the

[1] Said Columb-Cille: "Let *Déar* (Tear) be its name henceforward." This incident is found in the Celtic language in the most ancient manuscript which exists relative to Scotland; it has been recently discovered in Cambridge, and is of the ninth century. It is about to be published under the name of the *Book of Deir*. COSMO INNES, *Scotland in the Middle Ages*, p. 325. WHITLEY STOKES, *Saturday Review*, 8th December 1860, The Monastery of Deir was rebuilt for the Cistercians by the Earl of Buchan in 1213. The prophecy of Columba was verified in the family of the Earl Marischal, head of the great house of Keith, who was, after the Reformation, the first spoliator of the monastery, which had been given to him by James VI. In vain his wife, a daughter of Lord Holme, begged him not to accept the sacrilegious gift. He would not listen to her. The following night she saw in a dream a multitude of monks, clothed like those of Deir, surround the principal castle of the earl, Dunnotter-Craig which was situated on an immense rock on the coast. They began to demolish the rock with no other tools than *penknives:* at this sight the

great abbey which lasted a thousand years upon that spot always retained the name. "He who sows in tears shall reap in joy."

countess hastened to look for her husband, that he might stop their work of destruction; but when she returned, the rock and the castle had already been undermined and overthrown by the penknives of the monks, and nothing was to be seen but the fragments of the furniture floating on the sea. This vision was immediately interpreted as the announcement of a future catastrophe, and the use of penknives as a sign of the length of time which should pass before its fulfilment. From that moment this powerful house began to diminish, and finally fell in 1715 in the Stuart rebellion.

CHAPTER IV

COLUMBA CONSECRATES THE KING OF THE SCOTS.—HE GOES TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF IRELAND, DEFENDS THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE HIBERNO-SCOTIC COLONY, AND SAVES THE CORPORATION OF BARDS.

Passionate solicitude of Columba for his relatives and countrymen.—He protects King Aïdan in his struggle with the Anglo-Saxons of Northumbria.—The same king is crowned by Columba at Iona; the first example of a Christian consecration of kings.—The Stone of Destiny: the descendants of Aïdan.—Synod or Parliament of Drumceitt in Ireland.—Aedh, king of Ireland, and Aïdan, king of the Irish colonists in Scotland.—The independence of the new Scottish kingdom is recognised through the influence of Columba.—He interposes in favour of the bards, whom the king had proposed to outlaw.—Power and excesses of that corporation.—By means of Columba, the good grain is not burned with the weeds.—The bards' song of gratitude in honour of their saviour.—Columba, reproved by his disciple, desires that this song should not be repeated during his life.—Superstitious regard attached to it after his death.—Intimate union between music, poetry, and religion in Ireland.—The bards, transformed into minstrels, are the first champions of national independence and Catholic faith against the English conquest.—Fiercely assailed, they yet continue to exist up to our own day.—Moore's *Irish Melodies*.—The Celtic muse at the service of the vanquished in the Highlands of Scotland as in Ireland.

It would not, however, be natural to suppose that the mission of Columba among the Picts could entirely absorb his life and soul. That faithful love for his race and country which had moved him with compassion for the young Irish girl in captivity among the Picts did not permit him to remain indifferent to the wars and revolu-

tions which were at the bottom of all national life among the Irish Scots as well as the Irish colony in Scotland. There was not a more marked feature in his character than his constant solicitude, his compassionate sympathy, as well after as before his removal to Iona, for the bloody struggles in which his companions and relatives in Ireland were so often engaged. Nothing was nearer to his heart than the claim of kindred; for that reason alone he occupied himself without cease with the affairs of individual relatives. "This man," he said to himself, "is of my race; I must help him. It is my duty to pray for him, because he is of the same stock as myself. This other is of kin to my mother," &c. And then he would add, "My friends and kindred, who are descended like me from the Nialls, see how they fight!"[1] And from the far distance of his desert isle he fought with them in heart and thought, as of old he had aided them in person. He breathed from afar the air of battle; he divined the issue by what his companions considered a prophetic instinct, and told it to his monks, to his Irish countrymen, and to the Caledonian Scots who sought him in his new dwelling. With better reason still his soul kindled within him when he foresaw any struggle in which his new neighbours the Dalriadian colonists were to be engaged, either with the Picts, whom they were one day to conquer, or with the Anglo-Saxons.

One day towards the end of his life, being alone with Diarmid his minister (as the monk attached to his personal service was called), he cried out all at once, "The bell! let the bell be rung instantly!" The bell of the modest monastery was nothing better than one of the little square bells made of beaten iron, which are still shown in Irish museums, exactly similar to those which are worn by the cattle in Spain and the Jura. It was enough for the necessities of the little insular community. At its sound the monks

[1] "Quia est mihi cognationalis, et ex meæ matris parentela. . . . Mei cognationales amici. . . . Nellis nepotes."—ADAMN., ii. 40; i. 49; i. 7.

hastened to throw themselves on their knees around their father. "Now," said he, "let us pray—let us pray with intense fervour for our people, and for King Aïdan; for at this very moment the battle has begun between them and the barbarians." When their prayers had lasted some time, he said, "Behold, the barbarians flee! Aïdan is victorious!" [1]

The barbarians, against whom Columba rang his bells and called for the prayers of his monks, were the Anglo-Saxons of Northumbria, who were still pagans, and whose descendants were destined to owe the inestimable blessings of Christianity to the monks of Iona and the spiritual posterity of Columba. But at that time the invaders thought only of taking a terrible revenge for the evils which Britain, before they conquered it, had endured from Scoto-Pictish incursions, and of extending their power ever farther and farther on the Caledonian side. As for King Aïdan,[2] he had replaced his cousin-german, King Connall, who had guaranteed to Columba the possession of Iona, as chief of the Dalriadian colony in Argyll. His accession to the throne took place in 574, eleven years after the arrival of Columba; and nothing proves more fully the influence acquired by the Irish missionary during this short interval than Aïdan's resolution to have his coronation blessed by the abbot of Iona. Columba, though his friend, did not wish him to be king, preferring his brother; but an angel appeared to him three times in

[1] "Subito ad suum dicit ministratorem Diormitium, *Cloccam pulsa*. . . . Nunc intente pro hoc populo et Aidano rege oremus; hac cum hora incipiunt bellum. . . . Nunc barbari in fugam vertuntur, Aidanoque quanquam infelix concessa victoria."—ADAMN., i. 8. This *quanquam infelix* refers to the fact that in this battle, *de bello Miathorum* (as this chapter of Adamnan is entitled), the king lost three hundred and three men and two of his sons. His third son also fell in battle against the Saxons: "In Saxonia Celtica in strage."—*Ibid.*, c. 9. Adamnan speaks of the war as *de bello Miathorum*, but he does not explain if these *Miathi*, or *Mœatæ*, who are always associated with the Caledonians, were the allies or the enemies of the Dalriadian Scots.

[2] "Ædan, rex Scottorum qui Britanniam inhabitant."—BEDE, i. 34.

succession, and commanded him to consecrate Aïdan according to the ceremony prescribed in a book covered with crystal which was left with him for that purpose.[1] Columba, who was then in a neighbouring island, went back to Iona, where he was met by the new king. The abbot, obedient to the celestial vision, laid his hands upon the head of Aïdan, blessed him, and ordained him king.[2] He inaugurated thus not only a new kingdom, but a new rite, which became at a later date the most august solemnity of Christian national life. The coronation of Aïdan is the first authentic instance known in the West. Columba thus assumed, in respect to the Scotic or Dalriadian kingdom, the same authority with which the abbots of Armagh, successors of St. Patrick, were already invested in respect to the kings of Ireland. That this supreme authority and these august functions were conferred upon abbots instead of bishops, has been the cause of much surprise. But at that period of the ecclesiastical history of Celtic nations the episcopate was entirely in the shade ; the abbots and monks alone appear to have been great and influential, and the successors of St. Columba long retained this singular supremacy over the bishops.

According to Scotch national tradition, the new king Aïdan was consecrated by Columba upon a great stone called the Stone of Fate. This stone was afterwards transferred to Dunstaffnage Castle, the ruins of which may be seen upon the coast of Argyll, not far from Iona ; then to the abbey of Scone, near Perth ; and was finally carried away by Edward I., the cruel conqueror of Scotland, to Westminster, where it still serves as a pedestal for the throne of the kings of Eng-

[1] "Qui in manu vitreum ordinationis regum habebat librum."—ADAMN., iii. 5. This is the famous *Vitreux Codex* which, according to a narrative given by Reeves, was only shown to Columba by the angel, and did not remain in his hands.

[2] "Aidanum, iisdem adventantibus diebus, regem, sicut erat jussus, ordinavit . . . imponensque manum super caput ejus, ordinans benedixit." —Martene (*De Antiquis Ritibus Ecclesiæ*, vol. iii. l. ii. c. 10, in the treatise *De Solemni Regum Benedictione*) says that the consecration of Aïdan is the first known example of that solemnity.

land on the day of their coronation. The solemn inauguration of the kingdom of Aïdan marks the historical beginning of the Scotch monarchy, which before that period was more or less fabulous. Aïdan was the first prince of the Scots who passed from the rank of territorial chief to that of independent king, and head of a dynasty whose descendants were one day to reign over the three kingdoms of Great Britain.[1]

But to secure the independence of the new Scottish royalty, or rather of the young nation whose stormy and poetic history was thus budding under the breath and blessing of Columba, it was necessary to break the link of subjugation or vassalage which bound the Dalriadian colony to the Irish kings. All this time it had remained tributary to the monarchs of the island which it had left nearly a century before to establish itself in Caledonia. To obtain by peaceable means the abolition of this tribute, Columba—who was Irish by heart as well as by birth, yet who at the same time was, like the Dalriadians, his kinsmen, an emigrant in Caledonia, and, like the new king, descended from the monarchs of Ireland—must have seemed the mediator indicated by nature. He accepted the mission, and returned to Ireland, which he had thought never to see again, in company with

[1] Aïdan married a British wife, a daughter of those Britons who occupied the banks of the Clyde, and were neighbours of the Scots. With them for his allies, he made war vigorously, though unfortunately, as will be afterwards seen, upon the Anglo-Saxons. He survived Columba, and died in 606, after a reign of thirty-two years. His direct descendants reigned up to 689. They were then replaced by the house of Lorn, another branch of the first Dalriadian colony, whose most illustrious prince, Kenneth Macalpine, reduced the Picts to recognise him as their king in 842. The famous Macbeth and his conqueror Malcolm Canmore, the husband of St. Margaret, were both descended from Aïdan, or of the lineage of Fergus. The male line of these Scottish kings of Celtic race ended only with Alexander III. in 1283. The dynasties of Bruce and Stuart were of the female line. According to local and domestic traditions, the great modern clans of Macquarie, Mackinnon, Mackenzie, Mackintosh, Macgregor, Maclean, Macnab, and Macnaughten, are descended from the primitive Dalriadians.

the king whom he had just crowned, to endeavour to come to an agreement with the Irish monarch and the other princes and chiefs assembled at Drumkeath. His impartiality was above all suspicion; for the very day of the coronation of Aïdan he had announced to him, in the name of God, that the prosperity of the new Scotic kingdom depended upon peace with Ireland, its cradle. In the midst of the ceremony he had said aloud to the king whom he had crowned, "Charge your sons, and let them charge their grandchildren, never to expose their kingdom to be lost by their fault. The moment that they attempt any fraudulent enterprise against my spiritual descendants here, or against my countrymen and kindred in Ireland, the hand of God will weigh heavily upon them, the heart of men will be raised against them, and the victory of their enemies will be assured."[1]

The king of Ireland, Diarmid, who was, like Columba, of the race of Niall, but of the Nialls of the North, and whom our saint had so violently resisted, had died immediately after the voluntary exile of Columba. He perished, as has been mentioned, by the hand of a prince called Black Aedh, chief of the Antrim Dalriadians, who remained in Ireland when a part of their clan emigrated to Scotland. Some time afterwards the supreme throne of Ireland fell to another Aedh, of the Southern branch of the race of Niall, and consequently

[1] "Inter ordinationis verba . . . prophetare cœpit dicens: Tu filiis commenda ut et ipsi filiis et nepotibus et posteris suis commendent ne per consilia mala eorum sceptrum regni hujus de manibus suis perdant. . . . In me et in posteros meos . . . aut adversus cognatos meos qui sunt in Hibernia."—ADAMN., iii. 5. Colgan, in remarking this passage in his preface, cannot refrain from returning sadly upon the atrocities committed in Ireland by the Scots and Britons of his time, under the last descendants of the Dalriadian dynasty, James I. and Charles I. "Unde moderni Scoto-Britanni, qui cognatos sancti Columbæ in Hibernia nostris diebus ferro et flamma infestant, e suis sedibus pellunt et in ore crudelis gladii mactant, debent prædictam vindictam ore veridico Dei prophetæ prædictam formidare, si inter posteros Aidani regis velint numerari; si non, certe non minus metuenda sunt illa sacri eloquii oracula, quibus dicitur. Qui gladio perimit, gladio peribit."—*Trias Thaum.*, p. 320.

of the same stock as Columba.[1] He was also the friend and benefactor of his emigrant cousin, to whom he had given before his exile the site of Derry,[2] the most important of his Irish foundations. The first synod or parliament of Aedh's reign had been convoked in a place called Drumceitt,[3] the *Whale's Back*, situated in his special patrimony, not far from the sea and the gulf of Lough Foyle, where Columba had embarked, and at the further end of which was his dear monastery of Derry. It was there that he returned with his royal client, the new king of the Caledonian Scots, whose confessor, or, as the Irish termed it, *friend of his soul*, he had become.[4] The two kings, Aedh and Aïdan, presided at this assembly, which sat for fourteen months, and the recollection of which has been preserved among the Irish people, the most faithful nation in the world, for more than a thousand years.

The Irish lords and clergy encamped under tents like soldiers during the entire duration of this parliament.[5] The

[1] The poet-historian, Thomas Moore, by a singular confusion, looks upon Aedh the Black, the murderer of King Diarmid, and Aedh, son of Aimnire, the king of the Drumkeath parliament, as the same person.—*History of Ireland*, pp. 254, 263, Paris edition. I spare the reader all the other Aedhs or Aïdus, who are to be found mixed up with the history of the age of Columba in the inextricable Irish genealogies. My learned friend, M. Foisset, like a zealous Burgundian as he is, has pointed out to me the resemblance between the name of Aedh, which occurs so often among the Irish princes and kings, and that of the Ædui, the first inhabitants of Burgundy. He thinks, with reason, that the Celts of Gaul, conquered by Cæsar, had also lived, like their brethren in Ireland and Scotland, in clans, and is persuaded that the Ædui of Bibracte signified originally the clan of the sons of Aedh.

[2] LYNCH'S *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. ii. c. 9, p. 16.

[3] *Dorsum Cetæ* in Latin, *Drum Ceitt* or *Ceat* in Irish, at present called Drumkeath, near Newtown Limavaddy, in the county of Londonderry.

[4] Irish MS. quoted by Reeves, p. lxxvi. note 4.

[5] "Condictum regum."—ADAMNAN. "Collectis totius regni optimatibus, universoque clero . . . ad instar militum per papiliones et tentoria turmatim dispersi."—O'DONNELL, book iii. c. 2, 5. "Hiberniæ proceribus Drum-Keathian ad leges condendas coeuntibus et quatuordecim mensibus illic hærentibus."—LYNCH, c. 9. Colgan, who lived in 1645, narrates that the site of the assembly was then still frequented by numerous pilgrims,

most important question discussed among them was no doubt that of the tribute exacted from the king of the Dalriadians. It does not appear that the Irish king demanded tribute on account of the new kingdom founded by his ancient subjects, but rather on account of that part of Ireland itself, at present the county of Antrim, from whence the Dalriadian colonists had gone, and which was the hereditary patrimony of their new king.[1] This was precisely the position in which the Norman princes, who had become kings of England, while still dukes of Normandy, found themselves, five centuries later, in respect to the kings of France. Columba, the friend of both kings, was commissioned to solve the difficulty. According to some Irish authors, the abbot of Iona, when the decisive moment arrived, refused to decide, and transferred to another monk, St. Colman, the responsibility of pronouncing the judgment. At all events, the Irish king renounced all suzerainty over the king of the Dalriadians of *Albania*, as Scotland was then called. Independence and freedom from all tribute were granted to the Albanian Scots, who, on their side, promised perpetual alliance and hospitality to their Irish countrymen.[2]

Columba had another cause to plead at the parliament of Drumceitt, which was almost as dear to his heart as the independence of the Scotic kingdom and colony of which he was the spiritual head. The question in this case was nothing less than that of the existence of a corporation as powerful as, and more ancient and national than, the clergy itself: it concerned the bards, who were at once poets and genealogists, historians and musicians, and whose high position and popular ascendancy form one of the most characteristic features of Irish history. The entire nation, always

and that a procession was formerly celebrated there on the day of All-Saints: "cum summo omnium vicinarum partium accursu."—*Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*, vol. i. p. 204. The site is still to be seen upon an elevation at Roe Park, near Newtown Limavaddy.—REEVES, p. 37.

[1] MOORE'S *History of Ireland*, vol. i. c. 12, p. 256.

[2] REEVES, pp. lxxvi. and 92.

enamoured of its traditions, its fabulous antiquity, and local and domestic glory, surrounded with ardent and respectful sympathy the men who could clothe in a poetic dress all the lore and superstitions of the past, as well as the passions and interests of the present. In the annals of Ireland, as far back as they can be traced, the bards or *ollambh*, who were regarded as oracles of knowledge, of poetry, history, and music, are always to be found. They were trained from their infancy with the greatest care in special communities, and so greatly honoured that the first place at the royal table, after that of the king himself, was reserved for them.[1] Since the introduction of Christianity, the bards, like the Druids of earlier times, whose successors they are supposed to have been, continued to form a powerful and popular band. They were then divided into three orders: the *Fileas*, who sang of religion and of war; the *Brehons*, whose name is associated with the ancient laws of the country, which they versified and recited;[2] the *Seanachies*, who enshrined in verse the national history and antiquities, and, above all, the genealogies and prerogatives of the ancient families who were specially dear to the national and warlike passions of the Irish people. They carried this guardianship of historical recollections and relics so far as to watch over the boundaries of each province and family domain.[3] They took part, like the clergy, in all the assemblies, and with still greater reason in all the fights. They were over-

[1] EUGENE O'CURRY'S *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Irish History*. Dublin, 1861.

[2] The code known under the name of *Laws of the Brehons* continued to regulate the civil life of the Irish even under the English conquest; it was only abolished under James I. at the beginning of the seventeenth century; it had lasted, according to the most moderate calculations, since the time of King Cormac, in 266—that is to say, fourteen centuries.

[3] "Rei antiquariæ professores et poetas . . . quos tempore gentilismi Druidas, Vates, et Bardos . . . vocabant. . . . His ex officio incumbebat . . . familiarum nobilium et prærogativas studiose observare; regionum agrorumque metas ac limites notare ac distinguere."—O'DONNELL, book iii. c. 2 and 7.

whelmed with favours and privileges by the kings and petty princes, on whom their songs and their harps could alone bestow a place in history, or even a good name among their contemporaries. But naturally this great power had produced many abuses, and at the moment of which we speak, the popularity of the bards had suffered an eclipse. A violent opposition had been raised against them. Their great number, their insolence, their insatiable greed, had all been made subjects of reproach; and, above all, they were censured for having made traffic and a trade of their poetry —of lavishing praises upon the nobles and princes who were liberal to them, and making others the subject of satirical invectives, which the charm of their verse spread but too readily, to the great injury of the honour of families. The enmities raised against them had come to such a point, that King Aedh felt himself in sufficient force to propose to the assembly of Drumceitt the radical abolition of this dangerous order, and the banishment, and even outlawry, if not, as some say, the massacre, of all the bards.

It is not apparent that the clergy took any part whatever in this persecution of a body which they might well have regarded as their rivals. The introduction of Christianity into the country of Ossian, under St. Patrick, seems scarcely, if at all, to have affected the position of the bards. They became Christians without either inflicting or suffering any violence, and they were in general the auxiliaries and friends of the bishops, monks, and saints. Each monastery, like each prince and lord, possessed a bard, whose office it was to sing the glory, and often to write the annals, of the community.[1] Notwithstanding, it is apparent, through many of the legends of the period, that the bards represented a pagan power, in the eyes of many ecclesiastical writers, and that they were willingly identified with those Druids or Magi who had been the principal enemies of the evangelical

[1] Hersart de la Villemarqué, *La Poésie des Cloîtres Celtiques, Correspondant* du 25 Novembre 1863.

mission of Patrick in Ireland and of Columba in Scotland.[1] Even in the legend of Columba[2] it is noted that some among them had determined to make him pay for his ransom according to their custom, and had for this end addressed to him importunate solicitations, threatening, if he refused, to abuse him in their verse.

Notwithstanding, it was Columba who saved them. He who was born a poet, and remained a poet to the last day of his life, interceded for them, and gained their cause. His success was not without difficulty, for King Aedh was eager in their pursuit; but Columba, as stubborn as bold, made head against all. He represented that care must be taken not to pull up the good corn with the tares; that the general exile of the poets would be the death of a venerable antiquity and of that poetry which was so dear to the country and so useful to those who knew how to employ it.[3] The ripe corn must not be burned, he said, because of the weeds that mingle with it. The king and the assembly yielded at length, under condition that the number of bards should be henceforward limited, and that their profession should be put under certain rules determined by Columba himself. It was his eloquence alone which turned aside the blow by which they were threatened; and knowing themselves to be saved by him, they showed their gratitude by exalting his glory in their songs and by leaving to their successors the charge of continuing his praise.[4]

Columba himself had a profound pleasure in this poetical

[1] "Poetæ impudentes," says the legend of St. Colman, BOLL. Act. SS. Junii, vol. ii. p. 27.

[2] "Cum aliquot vernaculæ seu Hibernicæ poeseos professores, quos bardos vocant, eum nihil tum ad manum habentem, non importune tantum, sed improbe divexassent, nescio quod donativum ab eo sub interminatione invectivi poematis contendentes."—O'DONNELL, book i. c. 57.

[3] "Ne inter Antiquariorum vitia extirpanda, simul et interiret venerandæ antiquitatis studium. . . . Artem regno et recte usuris valde proficuam." —O'DONNELL.

[4] All the authorities of Irish history, printed or in manuscript, confirm this tradition (see REEVES, p. 79, and MOORE, p. 257). Adamnan alone

popularity. The corporation of bards had a chief, Dallan Fergall, who was blind, and whose violent death (he was murdered by pirates) has given him a place among the holy martyrs, of whom there are so few in Ireland. Immediately after the favourable decision of the assembly, Dallan composed a song in honour of Columba, and came to sing it before him. At the flattering sounds of this song of gratitude the abbot of Iona could not defend himself from a human sentiment of self-satisfaction. But he was immediately reproved by one of his monks, Baithen, one of his twelve original companions in exile, and who was destined to be his successor. This faithful friend was not afraid to accuse Columba of pride, nor to tell him that he saw a sombre cloud of demons flying and playing round his head. Columba profited by the warning. He imposed silence upon Dallan,[1] reminding him that it was only the dead who should be praised, and absolutely forbade him to repeat his song.[2] Dallan obeyed reluctantly, and awaited the death of the saint to make known his poem, which became celebrated in Irish literature under the name of *Ambhra*, or the *Praise of St. Columbcille.* It was still sung a century after his death throughout all Ireland and Scotland, and even the least devout of men repeated it with tenderness and fervour, as a safeguard against the dangers of war and every other accident.[3] It even came to be believed that every one who

says nothing of it; but he speaks of numerous songs in the Scotic language in honour of Columba, which circulated everywhere in Scotland and in Ireland.

[1] "Composuit patrio sermone rhythmum illum . . . qui in scholis Antiquariorum publice perlegi et scholiis ac commentariis exponi consuevit." —O'DONNELL, book i. c. 6. This poem, which has been the subject of innumerable commentaries, still exists in MS., and is to be published with all the *Liber Hymnorum* by Dr. Todd. Colgan possessed a copy which seemed to him almost unintelligible: "Est penes me exemplar hujus operis egregie scriptum, sed seclusis fusis, quos habet annexos, commentariis, hodie paucis, iisque peritissimis, penetrabile."—*Ubi supra.*

[2] *Vita Sancti Dallani Martyris*, ap. COLGAN, *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*, p. 204.

[3] "Ejusdem beati viri per quædam Scoticæ linguæ laudum ipsius car-

knew this Ambhra by heart and sang it piously would die a good death. But when the unenlightened people came so far as to believe that even great sinners, without either conversion or penitence, had only to sing the Ambhra of Columbcille every day in order to be saved, a wonder happened, says the historian and grand-nephew of the saints, which opened the eyes of the faithful, by showing to them how they ought to understand the privileges accorded by God to His saints. An ecclesiastic of the metropolitan church of Armagh, who was a man of corrupt life, and desired to be saved without making any change in his conduct, succeeded in learning the half of the famous Ambhra, but never could remember the other half. It was in vain that he made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the saint, fasted, prayed, and spent the entire night in efforts to impress it upon his memory—the next morning he found that, though he had at length succeeded in learning the latter half, he had completely forgotten the first.[1]

The gratitude of the bards to him who had preserved them from exile and outlawry, has certainly had some share in the wonderful and lasting popularity of Columba's name. Shrined in the national and religious poetry of the two

mina, et nominis commemorationem, quidam, quamlibet sceleratis laicæ conversationis homines et sanguinarii, ea nocte qua eadem decantaverant cantica, de manibus inimicorum qui eamdem eorumdem cantorum domum circumsteterant, sunt liberati. . . . Pauci ex ipsis, qui easdem sancti viri commemorationes, quasi parvi pendentes, canere noluerant decantationes . . . soli disperierunt. Hujus miraculi testes . . . centeni et amplius. Hoc idem ut contigisse probatur non in uno loco aut tempore, sed diversis locis et temporibus in Scotia et Britannia, simili tamen modo et causa liberationis factum fuisse. Hæc ab expertis uniuscujusque regionis, ubicumque res eadem simili contigit miraculo, indubitanter didicimus."—ADAMNAN, i. 1. Let us add that the disciples of Columba continued to cultivate music and poetry after his death. A modern poet, James Hogg, has written some English verses, in themselves insignificant, to an old air which had been sung by the monks of Iona.—WHITELAW, *The Book of Scottish Song*. Glasgow, 1857.

[1] VICOMTE DE LA VILLEMARQUÉ, *Poésie des Cloîtres Celtiques*, after COLGAN and O'DONNELL, *ubi supra*.

islands, his fame has not only lasted in full brilliancy in Ireland, but it has survived even the Reformation—which has destroyed almost all other traces of their past history as Christians—in the memory of the Celts of Scotland.

On the other hand, the protection of Columba certainly confirmed the popularity of the bards in the heart of the Irish nation. All opposition between the religious spirit and the bardic influence disappeared from his time. Music and poetry after that period identified themselves more and more with ecclesiastical life. Among the relics of the saints the harps on which they had played found a place. At the first English conquest, the bishops and abbots excited the surprise of the invaders by their love of music, and by accompanying themselves on the harp.[1] Irish poetry, which was in the days of Patrick and Columba so powerful and so popular, has long undergone in the country of Ossian the same fate as the religion of which these great saints were the apostles. Rooted like it in the heart of a conquered people, and like it proscribed and persecuted with unwearying vehemence, it has come ever forth anew from the bloody furrow in which it was supposed to be buried. The bards became the most powerful allies of patriotism, the most dauntless prophets of national independence, and also the favourite victims of the cruelty of spoilers and conquerors. They made music and poetry weapons and bulwarks against foreign oppression, and the oppressors used them as they had used the priests and the nobles. A price was set upon their heads. But while the last scions of the royal and noble races, decimated or ruined in Ireland, departed, to die out under a foreign sky amid the miseries of exile, the successor of the bards, the minstrel, whom nothing could tear from his native soil, was pursued, tracked, and taken like a wild

[1] "Hinc accidit ut episcopi et abbates et sancti in Hibernia viri citharas circumferre et in iis modulando pie delectari consueverint. . . . Sancti Kevini cithara ab indigenis in reverentia non modica et pro reliquiis virtuosis et magnis usque hodie habetur."—GIRALDUS, *Cambriæ Descriptio*, c. 12.

beast, or chained and slaughtered like the most dangerous of rebels.

In the annals of the atrocious legislation directed by the English against the Irish people, as well before [1] as after the Reformation, special penalties against the *minstrels*, *bards*, *rhymers*, and *genealogists*, who sustained the lords and gentlemen in their love of rebellion and of other crimes,[2] are to be met at every step. An attempt was made, under the sanguinary Elizabeth, to give pecuniary recompense to those who would celebrate "her Majesty's most worthy praise." The bargain was accepted by none. All preferred flight or death to this salary of lies. Wandering over hill and dale, hidden in the depths of the devastated country, they perpetuated there the poetic traditions of their condemned race, and sang the glory of ancient heroes and new martyrs, the shame of apostates, and the crimes of the sacrilegious stranger.

In order the better to brave tyranny in the midst of a subdued and silent people, they had recourse to allegory and the elegies of love. Under the figure of an enslaved queen —or of a woman loved with an everlasting love and fought for with despairing faithfulness, in face of the jealous fury of a step-mother—they celebrated again and again the Irish Fatherland, the country in mourning and tears, once queen and now a slave.[3] The Irish, says a great historian of our own day, loved to make of their country a real being whom they loved, and who loved them. They loved to address her without naming her name, and to identify the austere and perilous devotion which they had vowed to her with all that is sweetest and most fortunate in the affections of the heart, like those Spartans who crowned themselves with flowers when about to perish at Thermopylæ.[4]

[1] For instance, at the parliament of Kilkenny under Edward I.

[2] These are the words of an act of the time of Elizabeth, quoted by Moore, p. 257.

[3] "Erin of the sorrows, once a queen, now a slave."

[4] AUGUSTIN THIERRY, *Dix Ans d'Etudes Historiques.*

Up to the time of the ungrateful Stuarts, this proscription of the national poets was permanent, increasing in force with every change of reign and every new parliament. The rage of the Cromwellian Protestants carried them so far as to break, wherever they met with them, the minstrels' harps [1] which were still to be found in the miserable cottages of the starving Irish, as they were eleven centuries before, at the time when the courageous and charitable Bridget saw them suspended on the wall of the king's palace.[2] Nevertheless the harp has remained the emblem of Ireland even in the official arms of the British Empire ; and during all last century the travelling harper, last and pitiful successor of the bards protected by Columba, was always to be found at the side of the priest to celebrate the holy mysteries of the proscribed worship. He never ceased to be received with tender respect under the thatched roof of the poor Irish peasant, whom he consoled in his misery and oppression by the plaintive tenderness and solemn sweetness of the music of his fathers.

The continuance of these distinctive features of Irish character through so many centuries is so striking, and the misfortunes of that noble race touch us so nearly, that it is difficult to resist the temptation of leaving behind us those distant ages, and of following through later generations the melancholy relics of all that has been discovered or admired in the most ancient days. We may be pardoned for adding that, if the text of those poetic and generously obstinate

[1] "Efferati quidem excursores in obvias quasque lyras earum proscissione multis in locis immaniter sæviant."—LYNCH, *Cambrensis Eversus*, book i. c. 4, p. 316. This author, who wrote in 1662, feels himself obliged to give a detailed description of the harp, lest the instrument should disappear in the general ruin of Ireland. "Quare operæ me pretium facturum existimo, si lyræ formam lectori ob oculos ponam, ne illius memoris gentis excidio . . . innexa obliteretur." Charles II., as soon as he was established on the throne, permitted the passing of an act of Parliament "against the vagabond minstrels, to repress their rhymes and scandalous songs."

[2] "Et vidit citharas in domo regis, et dixit : Citharizate nobis citharis vestris."—*Tertia Vita Sanctæ Brigitæ*, c. 75, p. 536, ap. COLGAN.

protests against the enslavement of Ireland have perished, the life and spirit of them has survived in the pure and penetrating beauty of the ancient Irish airs. Their harmonies and their refrains, which are inimitably natural, original, and pathetic, move the depths of the soul, and send a thrill through all the fibres of human sensibility. Thomas Moore, in adapting to them words which are marked with the impression of a passionate fidelity to the proscribed faith and oppressed country, has given to the *Irish Melodies* a popularity which was not the least powerful among those pleas which determined the great contest of Catholic Emancipation.

The genius of Celtic poetry has, however, survived not only in Ireland, in the country of Columba and of Moore, but has found a refuge in the glens of the Scottish Highlands, among those vast moors and rugged mountains, and beside the deep and narrow lakes, which Columba, bearing the light of the faith to the Caledonian Picts, had so often traversed. In those districts where, as in a great part of Ireland, the Erse or Gaelic language is still spoken, the Celtic muse, always sad and always attached to the cause of the people, has been found in recent times, at the most prosaic moment of modern civilisation, in the eighteenth century itself, inspiring the warlike songs and laments which the Highlanders have consecrated to the conquered Pretender and his followers slain. And if we may believe a competent and impartial judge,[1] the last effusions of the soul of the Gaelic race surpass, in plaintive beauty and in passionate feeling, even those delicious Anglo-Scottish songs which no traveller can hear without emotion, and which have assured the palm, at least of poetry, to the cause of the Stuarts, which has been so sadly represented by its princes, and so ill served by events, but which the popular and national muse has thus avenged, even for the irremediable defeat of Culloden.

[1] CHARLES MACKAY, *The Jacobite Songs and Ballads of Scotland from 1688 to 1746*, Introduction, p. 18.

CHAPTER V

COLUMBA'S RELATIONS WITH IRELAND (*continued*)

Cordial intercourse of Columba with the Irish princes.—Prophecy upon the future of their sons.—Domnall, the king's son, obtains the privilege of dying in his bed.—Columba visits the Irish monasteries.—Popular enthusiasm.—Vocation of the young idiot afterwards known as St. Ernan.—Solicitude of Columba for the distant monasteries and monks.—He protects them from excessive labours and accidents.—He exercises authority over laymen.—Baithen, his cousin-german and principal assistant.—The respect shown to both in an assembly of learned men.

In the national parliament of Drumceitt which saved the bards, and where all the ecclesiastical chiefs of the Irish nation, along with their princes and provincial kings, were assembled, Columba, already invested by his apostolical labours with great power and authority, found himself surrounded by public homage, and tokens of universal confidence. To all the kings, whose kinsman and friend he was, he preached peace, concord, the pardon of affronts, and the recall of exiles, many of whom had found shelter in the island monastery which owed its existence to his own exile.[1] Nevertheless, it was not without trouble that he obtained from the supreme monarch the freedom of a young prince, named Scandlan, son of the chief of Ossory, whom Aedh detained in prison, in contempt of his sworn faith, and of an agreement to which Columba himself had been a witness. The noble abbot went to the prisoner in his dungeon, blessed him, and predicted to him that he should be twice exiled, but that he should survive his oppressor, and reign for

[1] Adamnan, i. 11, 13.

thirty years in his paternal domain. The king yielded on this point, but with a bad grace; he feared the influence of the illustrious exile, and had seen him return to Ireland with dissatisfaction. His eldest son had publicly ridiculed the monks of Iona, and had thus drawn upon himself the curse of Columba, which brought misfortune, for he was afterwards dethroned and assassinated. But the king's second son Domnall, who was still young, took openly the part of the abbot of Iona, who predicted for him not only a long and glorious reign, but the rare privilege of dying in his bed, on the condition of receiving the Holy Communion every eight days, and of keeping at least one in seven of his promises [1]—a somewhat satirical limit, which betrays either the old contradictory spirit of the converted Niall, or the recollection of his own legitimate resentment against certain princes. His prophecy, extremely improbable as it was, in a country where all the princes perished on the battlefield or by a violent death, was nevertheless fulfilled. Domnall, who was the third successor of his father, following after two other kings who were destroyed by their enemies, had a long and prosperous reign; he gained numerous victories, marching to battle under a banner blessed by St. Columba, and died, after an illness of eighteen months, in his bed, or, as Columba specified, with a precision which marks the rareness of the occurrence, on his down-bed.[2] His father, although reconciled to Columba, did not escape the common law. The great abbot bestowed upon him his monastic cowl, promising that it should always be to him as an impenetrable cuirass. After this, he never went into battle without putting on his friend's cowl above his armour. But one day when he had forgotten it, he was killed in a combat with the king of Lagenia or Leinster.[3] Columba had

[1] Irish MS. quoted by Reeves, p. 38.

[2] "Super plumatiunculam."—ADAMNAN, i. 15. Compare c. 10.

[3] LYNCH, *Cambrensis Eversus*, with Kelly's notes, 17, 19.—O'DONNELL, book i. c. 60.

previously warned him against waging war with the people of Leinster, which was the country of his mother, and which he loved with that impassioned clan or family affection which is so distinctive a feature in his character. The Lagenians had not lost the opportunity of working upon this sentiment: for one day, when he was at his abbey of Durrow, upon their boundary, a numerous assembly of all ages, from children to old men, came to him, and, surrounding him, pleaded with such animation their kindred with his mother, that they obtained from him the promise, or prophecy, that no king should ever be able to overcome them, so long as they fought for a just cause.[1]

There is no doubt that, after the assembly of Drumceitt, Columba made many journeys to Ireland. The direction of the various monasteries which he had founded there before his voluntary exile, and of which he had kept the government in his own hands, must have led him often back; but after that assembly, his visits were always made notable by miracles of healing, prophecy, or revelation, and still more by the tender solicitude of his paternal heart. Sometimes, towards the decline of his life, while traversing a hilly or marshy country, he travelled in a car, as St. Patrick had done; but the care with which his biographers note this fact, proves that formerly the greater part of his journeys had been made on foot.[2] He did not limit himself to communities of which he was the superior or founder; he loved to visit other monastic sanctuaries also, such as that of Clonmacnoise, whose importance has already been pointed out.[3] And on such occasions the crowding and eagerness of the monks to pay their homage to the holy and beloved old man was redoubled; they left their outdoor work, and,

[1] "Id prolixe afflictoque allegata cognatione flagitantes."—O'DONNELL, *loc. cit.* Compare REEVES, p. 221.

[2] "Per loca aspera et inaquosa. . . . Pergunt sic tota die per loca aspera, cœnosa et saxosa."—O'DONNELL, book iii. c. 17. Compare ADAMNAN, ii. 43.

[3] See *ante*, p. 21.

crossing the earthen intrenchment, which, like the *vallum* of Roman camps, enclosed the Celtic monasteries, came to meet him, chanting hymns. When they came up to him, they prostrated themselves on the ground at his feet, ere they embraced him; and in order to shelter him from the crowd during the solemn processions which were made in his honour, a rampart of branches was carried like a daïs by four men, who surrounded him, treading with equal steps.[1] An ancient author even goes so far as to say, that on the occasion of his return and prolonged stay in his native country, he was invested with a sort of general supremacy over all the religious of Ireland, both monks and nuns.[2]

During the journey from Durrow to Clonmacnoise, Columba made a halt at one of his own monasteries, where a poor little scholar, "of thick speech, and still more heavy aspect," whom his superiors employed in the meanest services, glided into the crowd, and, stealthily approaching the great abbot, touched the end of his robe behind him, as the Canaanitish woman touched the robe of our Lord. Columba, perceiving it, stopped, turned round, and, taking the child by the neck, kissed him. "Away, away, little fool!" cried all the spectators. "Patience, my brethren," said Columba: then turning to the boy, who trembled with fear, "My son," he said, "open thy mouth, and show me thy tongue." The child obeyed, with increasing timidity. The abbot made the sign of the cross upon his tongue, and added, "This child, who appears to you so contemptible, let no one henceforward despise him. He shall grow every day in wisdom and virtue; he shall be reckoned with the greatest among you; God will give to this tongue, which I have just blessed,

[1] "Undique ab agellulis monasterio vicinis . . . congregati . . . egressi . . . vallum monasterii, unanimes pergunt. . . . Quamdam de lignis pyramidem erga sanctum deambulantem constringentes . . . ne sanctus senior fratrum multitudinis constipatione molestaretur."—ADAMNAN, i. 3.

[2] *Vita S. Farannani Confessoris*, 15th February, c. 3, in COLGAN, *Acta SS. Hiberniæ*, p. 377. This author, who wrote only in the thirteenth century, cannot be considered of great authority.

the gift of eloquence and true doctrine."[1] The boy grew to manhood, and became celebrated in the churches of Scotland and Ireland, where he was venerated under the name of St. Ernan. He himself told this prophecy, so well justified by the event, to a contemporary of Adamnan, who has preserved all the details for us.

These journeys, however, were not necessary to prove Columba's solicitude for the monks who filled his monasteries. He showed the same care when distant as when at hand, by the help of that miraculous foresight which came to the assistance of his paternal anxiety in all their spiritual and temporal necessities. One day, after his return from Ireland, he was heard to stop suddenly short in the correspondence or transcription in which he had been engaged in his little cell in Iona, and cry with all his strength, "Help, help!" This cry was addressed to the guardian angel of the community, and the appeal was made on behalf of a man who had fallen from the top of the round tower which was then being built at Durrow, in the centre of Ireland—so great was his confidence in what he himself called the indescribable and lightning speed of the flight of angels; and greater still was his trust in their protection.[2] Another

[1] "Valde despectus vultu et habitu . . . cervicem pueri tenet, ipsumque trahens ante faciem suam statuit. Omnibus dicentibus. . . . Dimitte, dimitte, quare hunc infelicem et injuriosum retines puerum. . . . Sinite, fratres, hunc. . . . O fili, aperi os et porrige linguam . . . cum ingenti tremore. . . . In hac vestra congregatione grandis est futurus et lingua ejus salubri et doctrina et eloquentia a Deo donabitur. Hic erat eminens . . . postea per omnes Scotiæ ecclesias famosus et valde notissimus: qui hæc omnia supra scripta verba Segineo abbati de se prophetata enarravit, meo decessore Failbeo intentius audiente . . . cujus revelatione et ego ipse cognovi hæc eadem quæ enarravi."—ADAMNAN, i. 3. St. Ernan died in 635. M. de la Villemarqué has cited this incident in his *Légende Celtique*, as a type of the initiation of the children of barbarians into intellectual life by means of the monasteries.

[2] "In tuguriolo suo scribens. . . . Auxiliare, auxiliare. . . . Duo fratres ad januam sancti . . . causam talis subitæ vocis interrogant. . . . Angelo qui nunc inter vos stabat, jussi. . . . Valde mirabilis et pene indicibilis est angelici volatus pernicitas, fulgure ut æstimo, celeritati paritas."—ADAMNAN, iii. 15.

time, at Iona, in a day of chilly fog, such as occurs often in that sombre climate, he was suddenly seen to burst into tears. When asked the reason of his distress, he answered, "Dear son, it is not without reason that I weep. At this very hour I see my dear monks of Durrow condemned by their abbot to exhaust themselves in this dreary weather, building the great round tower of the monastery, and the sight overwhelms me." The same day, and at the same hour, as was afterwards ascertained, Laisran, the abbot of Durrow, felt within himself something like an internal flame, which reawakened in his heart a sentiment of pity for his monks. He immediately commanded them to leave their work, to warm themselves, and take some food, and even forbade them to resume their building until the weather had improved. This same Laisran afterwards came to deserve the name of Consoler of the Monks, so much had he been imbued by Columba with that supernatural charity which, in monastic life, as in every other Christian existence, is at once a light and a flame, *ardens et lucens*.[1]

Columba not only retained his superior jurisdiction over the monasteries which he had founded in Ireland, or which had been admitted to the privileges of his foundations, but he also exercised a spiritual authority, which it is difficult to explain, over various laymen of his native island. On one occasion, he is known to have sent his cousin, friend, and principal disciple to the centre of Ireland, to Drum-Cuill, to pronounce sentence of excommunication against a certain family, whose crime, however, is not specified. This disciple

[1] "Quanta animi teneritudine . . . et quam mirabili divinitus infusæ scientiæ dono . . . non secus ac si oculis præsentes essent, intuebatur." —O'DONNELL, ii. 65. "Quadam brumali et valde frigida die, magno molestatus mœrore, flevit. . . . Non immerito, filiole, ego hac in hora contristor, meos videns monachos quos Laisrannus nunc gravi fatigatos labore in alicujus majoris domus fabrica molestat . . . eodem momento horæ Laisrannus . . . quasi quadam pyra intrinsecus succensus."—ADAMNAN, i. 29. Compare book iii. c. 15 for a similar incident relating to the same monastery of Durrow and its round tower. Abbot Laisran was a near relative of Columba, and became his third successor at Iona.

was Baithen, whom we have seen to be one of Columba's companions from the moment of his exile, and who warned his superior against the fumes of pride, at the time when the bards began to express their enthusiastic gratitude. The gentle Baithen, when he had arrived at the appointed place, after having passed the whole night in prayer under an oak, said to his companions, "No, I will not excommunicate this family before making sure that it will not repent. I give it a year's respite, and during the year, the fate of this tree shall be a warning to it." Some time after the tree was struck by lightning; but we are not informed if the family thus warned was brought to repentance.

Baithen was a man of tender soul, of whom we would fain speak at greater length, if it were not needful to circumscribe the wide and confused records of Celtic hagiography. Columba compared him to St. John the Evangelist; he said that his beloved disciple resembled him who was the beloved disciple of Christ, by his exquisite purity, his penetrating simplicity, and his love of perfection.[1] And Columba was not alone in doing justice to the man who, after having been his chief lieutenant in his work, was to become his first successor. One day, in an assembly of learned monks, probably held in Ireland, Fintan, a very learned and very wise man,[2] and also one of the twelve companions of Columba's exile, was questioned upon the

[1] "Nolo hac vice hanc familiam excommunicare donec sciam an ad pœnitentiam convertatur, an non. . . . Dicebat quod . . . in innocentia sincerissima et in simplicitate prudentissima, et in disciplina rigoris perfectorum operum non dissimiles fuerunt."—ACT. SS. BOLLAND., vol. ii. June, p. 238. Let us add what these *Actes* relate of his incessant fervour in prayer: "Cum iter aliquod faceret aut alioquin alloqueretur . . . manus suas sub vestimento suo ad orandum Deum menti alacri interim dirigebat. . . . Inter duas particulas ori appositas, simul inter duo sorbitiuncula . . . et quod difficilius est, tempore metendi cum manipulum in terra collectum portaret ad cervicem, alterna brachia ad cœlum extendens, Tonantem interpellabat."—*Ibid.*, p. 237.

[2] So much so, that the Bollandists suppose this Fintan, described as *filius Lappani* in the Acts of St. Baithen, to be the same as the Fintan, *filius Aïdi*, of Adamnan, book ii. c. 32. Compare REEVES, p. 144.

qualities of Baithen. "Know," he answered, "that there is no one on this side of the Alps who is equal to him in knowledge of the Scriptures, and in the greatness of his learning." "What!" said his questioners—"not even his master, Columba?" "I do not compare the disciple with the master," answered Fintan. "Columba is not to be compared with philosophers and learned men, but with patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. The Holy Ghost reigns in him; he has been chosen by God for the good of all. He is a sage among all sages, a king among kings, an anchorite with anchorites, a monk of monks; and in order to bring himself to the level even of laymen, he knows how to be poor of heart among the poor;[1] thanks to the apostolic charity which inspires him, he can rejoice with the joyful, and weep with the unfortunate. And amid all the gifts which God's generosity has lavished on him, the true humility of Christ is so royally rooted in his soul, that it seems to have been born with him." It is added that all the learned hearers assented unanimously to this enthusiastic eulogium.

[1] "Scitote quod nullus ultra Alpes compar illi in cognitione Scripturarum divinarum et in magnitudine scientiæ reperitur. . . . Numquid ille sapientior est quam sanctus Columba nutricius illius? Ille enim non tam sapientibus litteratis, sed patriarchis et prophetis Dei et apostolis magis comparandus est. . . . Vera humilitas Christi robustissime in eo regnat, tanquam a natura ei hæreret. . . . Cum hoc testimonium vir sanctus in medio sapientum proferret. . . . Ille enim sapiens cum sapientibus, rex cum regibus, anachoreta cum anachoretis, et monachus cum monachis . . . et pauper corde cum pauperibus."—ACT. S. BOLLAND., vol. ii. June, p. 238.

CHAPTER VI

COLUMBA THE PROTECTOR OF SAILORS AND AGRICULTURISTS, THE FRIEND OF LAYMEN, AND THE AVENGER OF THE OPPRESSED

His universal solicitude and charity during all his missionary life.—The sailor-monks: seventy monks of Iona form the crew of the monastic fleet; their boats made of osiers covered with hides.—Their boldness at sea: the whirlpool of Corryvreckan.—Columba's prayer protects them against sea-monsters.—Their love of solitude leads them into unknown seas, where they discover St. Kilda, Iceland, and the Faröe Isles.—Cormac in Orkney, and in the icy ocean.—Columba often accompanies them: his voyages among the Hebrides.—The wild boar of Skye.—He subdues tempests by his prayer: he invokes his friend St. Kenneth.—He is himself invoked during life, and after his death, as the arbiter of winds.—Filial complaints of the monks when their prayers are not granted.—The benefits which he conferred on the agricultural population disentangled from the maze of fables: Columba discovers fountains, regulates irrigations and fisheries, shows how to graft fruit-trees, obtains early harvests, interferes to stop epidemics, cures diseases, and procures tools for the peasants.—His special solicitude for the monkish labourers: he blesses the milk when it is brought from the cow: his breath refreshes them on their return from harvest.—The blacksmith carried to heaven by his alms.—His relations with the laymen whose hospitality he claims: prophecy touching the rich miser who shuts his door upon him.—The five cows of his Lochaber host.—The poacher's spear.—He pacifies and consoles all whom he meets.—His prophetic threats against the felons and reivers.—Punishment inflicted upon the assassin of an exile.—Brigands of royal blood put down by Columba at the risk of his life.—He enters into the sea up to his knees to arrest the pirate who had pillaged his friend.—The standard-bearer of Cæsar and the old missionary.

DURING all the rest of his life, which was to pass in his island of Iona, or in the neighbouring districts of Scotland which had been evangelised by his unwearied zeal, nothing strikes and attracts the historian so much as the generous

ardour of Columba's charity. The history of his whole life proves that he was born with a violent and even vindictive temper; but he had succeeded in subduing and transforming himself to such a point that he was ready to sacrifice all things to the love of his neighbour. It is not merely an apostle or a monastic founder whom we have before us—beyond and besides this it is a friend, a brother, a benefactor of men, a brave and untiring defender of the labourer, the feeble, and the poor: it is a man occupied not only with the salvation but also with the happiness, the rights, and the interests of all his fellow-creatures, and in whom the instinct of pity showed itself in a bold and continual interposition against all oppression and wickedness.

Without losing the imposing and solemn character which always accompanied his popular fame, he will now be revealed to us under a still more touching aspect, through all the long succession of his apostolic labours, and in the two principal occupations—agriculture and navigation—which gave variety to his missionary life.

For navigation alternated with agriculture in the labours of the cenobites of Iona. The same monks who cultivated the scanty fields of the holy island, and who reaped and threshed the corn, accompanied Columba in his voyages to the neighbouring isles, and followed the sailor's trade, then, it would seem, more general than now among the Irish race.[1] Communication was then frequent, not only between Ireland and Great Britain, but between Ireland and Gaul. We have already seen in the port of Nantes an Irish boat ready to carry away the founder of Luxeuil.[2] The Gaulish merchants came to sell or offer their wines as far as to the centre of the island, to the abbey of Clonmacnoise.[3] In

[1] "Lugbeus quadam ad Sanctum die post frugum veniens triturationem. . . . Idem simul cum sancto viro ad Caput Regionis (*Cantyre*) pergens, nauclerum et nautas adventantis barcæ interrogans."—ADAMNAN, i. 28.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 271. "Navis quæ Scotorum commercia vexerat," says the biography of St. Columbanus.

[3] *Vita S. Kiarani*, c. 31, cited by REEVES, p. 57.

the life of our saint, seafaring populations[1] are constantly spoken of as surrounding him, and receiving his continual visits; and exercises and excursions are also mentioned, which associate his disciples with all the incidents of a seafaring life. As a proof of this we quote four lines, in very ancient Irish, which may be thus translated:—

> "Honour to the soldiers who live at Iona;
> There are three times fifty under the monastic rule,
> Seventy of whom are appointed to row,
> And cross the sea in their leathern barks."

These boats were sometimes hollowed out of the trunks of trees, like those which are still found buried in the *bogs* or turf-mosses of Ireland; but most generally they were made of osier, and covered with buffalo-skins, like those described by Cæsar.[2] Their size was estimated by the number of skins which had been used to cover them. They were generally small, and those made of one or two skins were portable. The abbot of Iona had one of this description for the inland waters when he travelled beyond the northern hills (*dorsum Britanniæ*), which he crossed so often to preach among the Picts.[3] At a later period the community pos-

[1] "Nautæ, navigatores, remiges, nautici."

[2] "Corpus navium viminibus contextum coriis integebatur."—*Bell. Civil.*, i. 54.

> "Primum cana salix, madefacto vimine, parvam
> Texitur in puppim cæsoque induta juvenco."
>
> —LUCAN., iv.

These boats were called in Celtic *Curach*, from which comes *curruca*, or *currica* in monkish Latin. These osier canoes are still in use, under the name of *coracle*, in the Welsh seaports. They are composed of a light construction of willow laths, covered either with skin or with tarpaulin. After their day's work the fishers put the coracle to dry; and, taking it on their backs, carry it to their cottage door. This has been seen by M. Alphonse Esquiros at Caermarthen.—*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15th February 1865.

[3] "Mitte te in navim unius pellis. . . . Carabum ex duobus tantum coriis et demidio factum. . . . Nunc, nunc celerius nostram quam ultra rivum naviculam posuistis in domum, huc citius advehite, et in viciniore domuncula ponite."—ADAMNAN, i. 34.

sessed many of a much larger size, to convey the materials for the reconstruction of the primitive monastery at Iona, and the timber which the sons of Columba cut down and fashioned in the vast oak forests which then covered the whole country, now so sadly deprived of wood. They went like galleys, with sail or oar, and were furnished with masts and rigging like modern boats. The holy island had at last an entire fleet at its disposal, manned and navigated by the monks.[1]

In these frail skiffs Columba and his monks ploughed the dangerous and stormy sea which dashes on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland, and penetrated boldly into the numberless gulfs and straits of the sombre Hebridean archipelago. They knew the perils to which their insular existence exposed them; but they braved those dangers without fear, accustomed as they were to live in the midst of storms,[2] upon an isle which the great waves of ocean threatened

[1] This passage of Adamnan is very important for the history of the primitive Celtic navigation. "Cum dolatæ per terram pineæ et roboreæ traherentur longæ trabes *et magnæ navium paritur et domus materiæ eveherentur*. . . . Ea die qua nostri nautæ, omnibus præparatis, supra memoratarum ligna materiarum proponunt scaphis per mare et curucis trahere. . . . Per longas et obligas vias tota die properis flatibus, Deo propitio famulantibus, et plenis sine ulla retardatione velis, ad Ionam insulam omnis illa navalis emigratio prospere evenit."—ii. 45. The words in italics are the text given by the Bollandists (*Acta Sanctorum*, Junii, vol. ix. p. 275), which seems to us preferable to that of the MS. followed by Dr. Reeves. There is here question of three kinds of boats: *naves*, *scaphæ*, and *curucæ;* and it is evident that there must have been a workshop on the island for the building of the larger vessels, because great logs of wood were carried there destined to be employed in the building of boats as well as for the monastic buildings. In another passage (ADAMNAN, ii. 35), a transport boat, *oneraria navis*, is spoken of, manned by monks, and laden with osiers which the abbot Columba had sent for to a neighbouring property: "Virgarum fasciculos ad hospitium construendum."

[2] "Die fragosæ tempestatis et intolerabilis undarum magnitudinis. . . . Quis, ait (sanctus), hac die valde ventosa et nimis periculosa, licet breve, fretum prospere transnavigare potest?"—ADAMNAN, i. 4. This recalls the lines of the poet—

> "Quid rigor æternus cœli, quid frigora possunt,
> Ignotumque fretum?"
>
> —CLAUDIAN, *in Consulat. III. Honor.*, v. 54.

continually to swallow up. Not less alarming was their position when the winds carried them towards the terrible whirlpool, named after a prince of the Niall family, who had been drowned there, the Caldron of Brechan, and which there was always a risk of being driven upon while crossing from Ireland to Scotland. The winds, when blowing from certain directions, hollow out in their whirl such terrible abysses about this spot, that even to our own time it has continued the terror of sailors. The holiest of Columba's guests passed it by with trembling, raising their hands towards heaven to implore the miracle which alone could save them.[1] But he himself, who one day was almost swallowed up in it, and whose mind was continually preoccupied by the recollection of his kindred, imagined that he saw in this whirlpool a symbol of the torments endured in purgatory by the soul of his relative who had perished at that spot, and of the duty of praying for the repose of that soul at the same time as he prayed for the safety of the companions of his voyage.[2]

Columba's prayers, his special and ardently desired bless-

[1] "Nunc in undosis Charybdis Brecani æstibus valde periclitatur, ambasque ad cœlum, in prora sedens, palmas elevat."—ADAMNAN, i. 5. "Est vorago periculosissima marina, qua, si qua navis intrat, non evadit."—*Vita Sancti Kiarani*, apud REEVES, 263. Compare GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS, *Topogr. Hiberniæ*, ii. 41. Walter Scott has not omitted this spot in his poetical itinerary—

> "I would
> That your eye could see the mood
> Of Corryvreckan's whirlpool rude,
> When dons the Hag her whitened hood. . . .
> And Scarba's isle, whose tortured shore
> Still rings to Corryvreckan's roar."

It must be remarked that as the name of Scotia has been transferred from Ireland to Scotland, the name of the abyss so feared by the sailors of Iona has also been transferred to the whirlpool which tourists see in the distance between the isles of Scarba and Iona, in the much-frequented route from Oban to Glasgow.

[2] "Illa sunt ossa Brecani cognati nostri, quæ voluit Christus ita nobis ostendi, ut pro defuncti refrigerio, ac pro nostro a præsenti periculo liberatione simul apud Dominum intercedamus."—O'DONNELL, ii. 21, apud COLGAN, p. 434.

ing, and his constant and passionate intercession for his brethren and disciples, were the grand safeguard of the navigators of Iona, not only against wind and shipwrecks, but against other dangers which have now disappeared from these coasts. Great fishes of the cetaceous order swarmed at that time in the Hebridean sea. The sharks ascended even into the Highland rivers, and one of the companions of Columba, swimming across the Ness, was saved only by the prayer of the saint, at the moment when he was but an oar's length from the odious monster, which had before swallowed one of the natives.[1] The entire crew of a boat manned by monks took fright and turned back one day on meeting a whale, or perhaps only a shark more formidable than its neighbours; but on another occasion, the same Baithen who was the friend and successor of Columba, encouraged by the holy abbot's blessing, had more courage, continued his course, and saw the monster bury itself in the waves. "After all," said the monk, "we are both in the hands of God, both this monster and I." [2] Other monks, sailing in the high northern sea, were panic-struck by the appearance of hosts of unknown shell-fish, who, attaching themselves to the oars and sides of the boat, made holes in the hide with which the framework was covered.[3]

[1] ADAMNAN, ii. 27.

[2] "Ecce cetus miræ et immensæ magnitudinis, se instar montis erigens, ora aperuit patula nimis dentosa. . . . Remiges, deposito velo, valde perterriti . . . illam obortam ex belluino motu fluctuationem vix evadere potuerunt. . . . Cui Baitheneus: Ego et illa bellua sub Dei potestate sumus. . . . Æquor et cetum, ambabus manibus elevatis, benedicit intrepidus. . . . Bellua magna se sub fluctu immergens . . . nusquam apparuit."—ADAMNAN, i. 19. Up to the eighteenth century whales frequented these parts, and they have been seen to capsize fishing-boats. —MARTIN'S *Western Islands*, p. 5. The whales have disappeared, as have also the seals, which as late as 1703 supplied food to the Hebridean islands. The monastery of Iona kept a flock of them in a neighbouring island: "Parvam insulam ubi marini nostri juris vituli generantur et generant." A robber attempted to take them away, but sheep were given up to him in preference.—ADAMNAN, i. 42.

[3] "Quædam, usque in id temporis invisæ mare obtegentes occurrerant

It was neither curiosity nor love of gain, nor even a desire to convert the pagans, which stimulated Columba's disciples to dare all the dangers of navigation in one of the most perilous seas of the world; it was the longing for solitude, the irresistible wish to find a more distant retreat, an asylum still further off than that of Iona, upon some unknown rock amid the loneliness of the sea, where no one could join them, and from which they never could be brought back. They returned to Iona without having discovered what they were in search of, sad yet not discouraged; and after an interval of rest always took to sea again, to begin once more their anxious search.[1] It was thus that the steep and almost inaccessible island of St. Kilda,[2] made famous by the daring of its bird-hunters, was first discovered; then far to the north of the Hebrides and even of the Orcades, they reached the Shetland Isles, and even, according to some, Iceland itself, which is only at the distance of a six days' voyage from Ireland, and where the first Christian church bore the name of St. Columba. Another

tetræ et infestæ nimis bestiolæ quæ horribili impetu carinam et latera, puppimque et proram ita forti ferebant percussura, ut pelliceum tectum navis penetrale putarentur penetrare posse. Prope ranarum magnitudinem aculeis permolestæ, non volatiles, sed natatiles, sed et remorum palmulas infestabant."—ADAMNAN, ii. 42.

[1] "Desertum in pelago intransmeabili invenire optantes."—ADAMNAN, ii. 42. "Baitheneus . . . benedici a sancto petivit cum ceteris, in mari eremum quæsiturus, post longos per ventosa circuitus æquora, eremo non reperto, in patriam reversus."—*Ibid.*, i. 20.

[2] Several religious buildings of a very early date, and a church dedicated to St. Columba, were to be found in St. Kilda as late as 1758. The inhabitants of the island, though Calvinists, still celebrated the saint's day by carrying all the milk of their dairies to the governor or farmer of the isle, which belonged then to a chief of the clan Macleod. This farmer distributed it in equal portions to every man, woman, and child in the island.—See *History of St. Kilda*, by Kenneth Macaulay. This islet, which is the most western spot in Europe, is celebrated for the exploits of the bird-catchers, who are suspended by long cords over perpendicular cliffs. It has scarcely eighty inhabitants. The site of the chapel called that of Columba is still shown, with a cemetery and some medicinal and consecrated springs. St. Columba's day is still observed by the people.

of their discoveries was the Faröe Islands, where the Norwegians at a later date found traces of the sojourn of the Irish monks, Celtic books, crosses, and bells.[1] Cormac, the boldest of these bold explorers, made three long, laborious, and dangerous voyages with the hope, always disappointed, of finding the wilderness of which he dreamed. The first time on landing at Orkney he escaped death, with which the savage inhabitants of that archipelago threatened all strangers, only by means of the *recommendations* which Columba had procured from the Pictish king, himself converted, to the still pagan king of the northern islanders.[2] On another occasion the south wind drove him for fourteen successive days and nights almost into the depths of the icy ocean, far beyond anything that the imagination of man had dreamed of in those days.[3]

[1] Landnamabok, ap. *Antiq. Celto-Scand.*, p. 14. Dicuil, who wrote in 795, states that a hundred years before the Faröe Islands had been inhabited by "*eremitæ ex nostra Scotia navigantes.*"—Ed. Letronne, p. 39. Compare INNES, *Scotland in the Middle Ages*, p. 101, and LANIGAN, *Eccles. History of Ireland*, c. 3, p. 225, where the question of the first discovery of Iceland is thoroughly investigated.

[2] "Brudeo regi, præsenti Orcadum regulo, commendavit dicens: Aliqui ex nostris nuper emigraverunt, desertum in pelago intransmeabili invenire optantes, qui si forte post longos circuitus Orcades devenerunt insulas, huic regulo cujus obsides in manu tua sunt, diligenter commenda . . . et propter supradictam S. viri commendationem, de morte in Orcadibus liberatus est vicina."—ADAMNAN, ii. 42. This passage will recall that of Ariosto, where he places in the Hebrides the scene of Olympia's deliverance by Roland, and attributes to the inhabitants of these islands the habit of exposing their women to sea monsters:—

> "Per distrugger quell' isola d'Ebuda
> Che di quante il mar cinge è la piu cruda.
> Voi dovete saper ch'oltre l'Irlanda,
> Fra molte, che vi son, l'isola giace
> Nomata Ebuda, che per legge manda
> Rubando intorno il suo popol rapace."
>
> —*Orlando Furioso*, ix. 11, 12.

[3] "Cormacus, qui tribus non minus vicibus eremum in Oceano laboriose quæsivit, nec tamen invenit."—ADAMNAN, i. 6. "Postquam a terris per infinitum Oceanum plenis enavigavit velis . . . usque ad mortem periclitari cœpit. Nam cum ejus navis a terris per quatuordecim æstivi temporis

Columba, the father and head of those bold and pious mariners, followed and guided them by his ever vigilant and prevailing prayers. He was in some respects present with them, notwithstanding the distance which separated them from the sanctuary and from the island harbours which they had left. Prayer gave him an intuitive knowledge of the dangers they ran. He saw them, he suffered and trembled for them ; and immediately assembling the brethren who remained in the monastery by the sound of the bell, offered for them the prayers of the community. He implored the Lord with tears to grant the change of wind which was necessary for those at sea, and did not rise from his knees until he had a certainty that his prayers were granted. This happened often, and the saved monks, on returning from their dangerous voyages, hastened to him to thank and bless him for his prophetic and beneficent aid.[1]

Often he himself accompanied them in their voyages of circumnavigation or exploration, and paid many visits to the isles of the Hebridean archipelago discovered or frequented by the sailors of his community, and where *cells* or little colonies from the great island monastery seem to have existed. This was specially the case at Eigg, where a colony of fifty-two monks, founded and ruled by a disciple of the abbot of Iona, were killed by pirates twenty years after his death.[2] This was a favourite spot which he loved

dies, totidemque noctes, plenis velis, austro flante vento, ad septentrionalis plagam cœli directo excurreret cursu, ejusmodi navigatio ultra humani excursus modum et irremeabilis videbatur."—ADAMNAN, ii. 42.

[1] "Eadem hora et sanctus noster, quamlibet longe absens corpore, spiritu tamen præsens in navi cum Cormaco erat. Unde . . . personante signo fratres ad orationem convocant. . . . Ecce enim nunc Cormacus cum suis nautis. . . . Christum intentius precatur : et nos ipsum orando adjuvemus. . . . Et post orationem cito surgit, et abstergens lacrymas . . . quia Dominus austrum nunc in aquilonarem convertit flatum, nostros de periculis commembres retrahentem, quos hic ad nos iterum reducat."—*Ibid.*, ii. 42.

[2] The tragedy of Eigg, which took place in 617, deserves special mention. According to Irish annals, St. Donnan, the founder of the community,

to visit, no doubt to enjoy the solitude which was no longer to be found at Iona, where the crowds of penitents, pilgrims, and petitioners increased from day to day. And he took special pleasure also in Skye, the largest of the Hebridean isles, which, after the lapse of twelve centuries, was recalled to the attention of the world by the dangerous and romantic adventures of Prince Charles-Edward and Flora Macdonald. It was then scarcely inhabited, though very large and covered by forests, in which he could bury himself and pray, leaving even his brethren far behind him. One day he met an immense wild boar pursued by dogs; with a single word he killed the ferocious brute, instead of protecting it, as in similar cases the saints of the Merovingian legends were so ready to do.[1] He continued during all the middle ages the patron of Skye, where a little lake still bears his name, as well as several spots, and monuments in the neighbouring isles.[2]

was the friend and disciple of Columba. Desirous of finding a more solitary retreat, he established himself with some companions in the island of Eigg, which was then inhabited only by the sheep of the queen of the country (many of the islets near Staffa are at present used as pasture). The queen, informed of this invasion of her territory, commanded that all should be killed. When the murderers arrived on the island it was the eve of Easter, and mass was being said. Donnan begged them to wait until mass was over. They consented, and when the service was at an end the monks gave themselves up to the sword. According to another version the queen or lady of the soil sent pirates (latrones) to kill them. They were surprised singing psalms in their oratory, from whence they went into the refectory, in order that they might die where the most carnal moments of their life had been passed. There were fifty-two of them. This is the version given by the Bollandists, vol. ii. April, p. 487. As if by the special blessing of these martyrs, this isle was still Catholic in 1703, and St. Donnan was venerated.—MARTIN'S *Journey to the Western Islands*, p. 279.

[1] "Cum in Scia insula aliquantis demoraretur diebus, paulo longius solus, orationis intuitu, separatus a fratribus, silvam ingressus. . . . Venatici canes. . . . Ulterius huc procedere noles: in loco ad quem devenisti morere."—ADAMNAN, ii. 26.

[2] This lake has been drained by Lord Macdonald, the present proprietor of the island. The memory and name of Columba are distinctly to be found at *Eilea Naombh*, where a well which he had hollowed in the

Storms often disturbed these excursions by sea, and then Columba showed himself as laborious and bold as the most tried of his monastic mariners. When all were engaged in rowing, he would not remain idle, but rowed with them.[1] We have seen him brave the frequent storms of the narrow and dangerous lakes in the north of Scotland.[2] At sea he retained the same courageous composure in the most tempestuous weather, and took part in all the sailors' toils. During the voyage which he made from Iona to Ireland, to attend with King Aïdan the parliament of Drumceitt, his vessel was in great danger; the waves dashed into the boat till it was full of water, and Columba took his part with the sailors in baling it out. But his companions stopped him. "What you are doing at present is of little service to us," they said to him; "you would do better to pray for those who are about to perish." He did so, and the sea grew calm from the moment when, mounting on the prow, he raised his arms in prayer.

With these examples before them, his companions naturally appealed to his intercession whenever storms arose during any of his voyages. On one occasion he answered them, "It is not my turn; it is the holy abbot Kenneth who must pray for us." Kenneth was the abbot of a monastery in Ireland, and a friend of Columba's who came often to Iona to visit him. At the very same hour he heard the voice of his friend echo in his heart, and, warned by an

rock, and the tomb of his mother *Eithne*, are still shown; and also at Tiree, so often mentioned by Adamnan under the name of *Terra Ethice*. In all the bleak islands of the western coast of Scotland, and especially of the district of Lorn (Argyllshire), there are sculptured crosses of curious and varied forms, tombstones, ruined chapels, buildings of coarse construction and singular shape, Druidical stones, and churches more or less ancient, almost always dedicated to Columba. These are carefully described in a small volume with engravings, which has been published anonymously by Thomas Muir, a Leith merchant, entitled *The Western Islands;* Edinburgh, 1861.

[1] *Vitam S. Cogelli*, ap. COLGAN, p. 458.

[2] See *ante*, page 65.

internal voice, left the refectory where he was, and hastened to the church to pray for the shipwrecked, crying, "We have something else to do than to dine when Columba is in danger of perishing at sea." He did not even take the time to put on both his shoes before he went to the church, for which he received the special thanks of his friend at Iona;[1] an incident which recalls another Celtic legend—that of the bishop St. Paternus, who obeyed the call of his metropolitan with a boot upon one foot only.[2]

Under all these legendary digressions it is evident that the monastic apostle of Caledonia, apart from the prevailing efficacy of his prayers, had made an attentive study of the winds and of all the phenomena of nature which affected the lives of the insular and maritime people whom he sought to lead into Christianity. A hundred different narratives represent him to us as the Eolus of those fabulous times and dangerous seas. He was continually entreated to grant a favourable wind for such or such an expedition; it even happened one day that two of his monks, on the eve of setting out in two different directions, came to him to ask, the one a north wind, and the other a south wind. He granted the prayer of both, but by delaying the departure

[1] "In mari periclitari cœpit; totum namque vas navis, valde concussum, magnis undarum cumulis fortiter ferebatur. Nautæ tum forte sancto sentinam cum illis exhaurire conanti aiunt: Quod nunc agis non magnopere nobis proficit periclitantibus, exorare potius debes pro pereuntibus. Et intentans precem . . . aquam cessat amaram exinanire . . . dulcem fundere cœpit. Sæva nimis insistente et periculosa tempestate: Hac in die non est meum pro vobis in periculo orare, sed est abbatis Cainnachi sancti viri. . . . Spiritu revelante sancto, supradictam sancti Columbæ interiore cordis aure vocem audiens. . . . Non est tempus prandere quando in mari periclitatur navis sancti Columbæ. . . . Nunc valde nobis proficit tuus ad ecclesiam velox cum uno calceamento cursus."—ADAMNAN, ii. 12, 13.

[2] Vol. ii. p. 154. Cainnach or Kenneth, a saint very popular in Scotland, whose name has been borne by several Scottish kings, was abbot of Aghaboe, in the diocese of Ossory. Born about 517, he died in 600, and left his name to the neighbouring islet of Inch-Kenneth, near Iona, which was visited by Johnson.

of the one who was going to Ireland until after the arrival of the other, who went only to the neighbouring isle of Tiree.[1]

Thus it happened that from far and near Columba was invoked or feared by the sailors as the master of all the winds that blew. Libran of the Rushes, the generous penitent, whose curious history has been already recorded, wishing to return from Ireland to Iona, was turned back by the crew of the boat which was leaving the port of Derry for Scotland, because he was not a member of the community of Iona. Upon which the disappointed traveller mentally invoked across the sea the help of his absent friend. The wind immediately changed, and the boat was driven back to land. The sailors saw poor Libran still lingering upon the shore, and called to him from the deck, "Perhaps it is because of thee that the wind has changed; if we take thee with us, art thou disposed to make it once more favourable?" "Yes," said the monk; "the holy abbot Columba, who imposed upon me seven years of penitence, whom I have obeyed, and to whom I wish to return, will obtain that grace for you." And the result was that he was taken on board, and the journey was happily accomplished.[2]

These events took place in his lifetime; but during at least a century after his death he remained the patron, always popular and propitious, of sailors in danger. A tone of familiar confidence, and sometimes of filial objurgation, may be remarked in their prayers, such as may be found among the Celts of Armorica and the Catholic nations of the south of Europe. Adamnan confesses that he himself and some other monks of Iona, embarked in a flotilla of a dozen

[1] "Simul unanimes postulant ut ipse a Domino postulans impetraret prosperum crastina die ventum sibi dari diversa emigraturis via."—ADAMNAN, ii. 15.

[2] "Clamitans de litore rogitat ut ipsum nautæ cum eis susciperent navigaturum ad Britanniam. Sed ipsi refutaverunt eum, quia non erat de monachis sancti Columbæ. . . . Videntes virum . . . secus flumen cursitantem . . . ad ipsum de navi clamitantes. . . . Qui statim, rate ascensa: In nomine Omnipotentis, ait, cui sanctus Columba inculpabiliter servit, tensis rudentibus, levate velum."—*Ibid.*, ii. 39.

boats charged with oaken beams for the reconstruction of the monastery, were so detained by contrary winds in a neighbouring island, that they took to accusing their Columba. "Dear saint," they said to him, "what dost thou think of this delay? We thought up to this moment that thou hadst great favour with God." Another time, when they were detained by the same cause in a bay near the district of Lorn, precisely on the vigil of St. Columba's day, they said to him, "How canst thou leave us to pass thy feast to-morrow among laymen, and not in thine own church? It would be so easy for thee to obtain from the Lord that this contrary wind should become favourable, and permit us to sing mass in thy church!" On these two occasions their desires were granted; the wind changed suddenly, and permitted them to get to sea and make their way to Iona in those frail boats whose spars, crossing upon the mast, formed the august symbol of redemption. More than a hundred witnesses of these facts were still living when the biographer of our saint wrote his history.[1]

This tender and vigilant charity, which lent itself to all the incidents of a sailor's and traveller's life, becomes still more strongly apparent during all the phases of his existence, in his relations with the agricultural population, whether of Ireland, which was his cradle, or of his adopted country Caledonia. Amid the fabulous legends and apocryphal and childish miracles with which Irish historians have filled out the glorious story of the great missionary,[2] it is

[1] "Quodam modo quasi accusare nostrum Columbam cœpimus. . . . Placetne tibi, sancte, hæc nobis adversa retardatio? huc usque a te, Deo propitio, aliquod nostrorum laborum speravimus consolationum adjumentum, te æstimantes alicujus esse grandis apud Deum honoris. . . . Placetne tibi, sancte, crastinam tuæ festivitatis inter plebeios et non in tua ecclesia transigere diem? . . . tui natalis missarum solemnia celebremus. . . . Proinde orantes nautæ vela subrigunt . . . tum nautæ antennas, crucis instar, et vela protensis sublevans rudentibus, prosperis et lenibus ventis eadem die appetentes insulam."—ADAMNAN, ii. 45.

[2] The pious Franciscan Colgan, who has included in his collection of *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ* (unhappily incomplete) so many fables, has, not-

pleasant to be able to discover the unmistakable evidence of his intelligent and fruitful solicitude for the necessities, the labours, and the sufferings of the inhabitants of the rural districts, and his active intervention on their behalf. When the legend tells us how, with one stroke of his crosier, he made fountains of sweet waters spring in a hundred different corners of Ireland or Scotland, in arid and rocky districts, such as that of the peninsula of Ardnamurchan ;[1] when it shows him lowering, by his prayers, the cataracts of a river so that the salmon could ascend in the fishing season, as they have always done since, to the great benefit of the dwellers by the stream,[2] we recognise in the tale the most

withstanding, omitted a crowd of incredible narratives which his predecessors had adopted. "Nonnulla . . . tanquam ex monumentis vel apocryphis, vel ex rerum forte vere gestorum nimia exaggeratione speciem fabulæ præferentibus, consulte omittenda duximus. . . . Quia nobis apparent vel exegetum vel librariorum (qui miris mirabiliora immiscuerunt) licentiis et commentis ita essa depravata ut solum fabularum speciem præferant."—*Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 441. The Bollandists protested with still greater energy, and repeatedly, against the fables which they, nevertheless, thought themselves obliged to reproduce. "Vitæ hujus auctor aliquid habere videtur de genio Hibernico, cui solet esse perquam familiare, ambulare in mirabilibus, in rebus, inquam, supra fidem prodigiosis, ne dicam portentosis."—Vol. iii. August, p. 658. Compare the same volume, p. 742, and vol. ii. July, pp. 241 and 299.

[1] "Tergemino pedi in terram ictu, tergeminos fontes erumpere fecit."—O'Donnell, book i. c. 86; Adamnan, i. 12, ii. 10.

[2] "Columba ratus eam fluminis sterilitatem a prædicta cataracta derivari, et in commune vergere accolarum dominorumque ejus ditionis damnum, fluvium benedixit, rupique in Christi nomine jussit tantum subsidere quantum opus esset ut pisces ultro citroque libere commearent. Paruit confestim sancti viri imperio præfracta rupes et . . . facta est demissior, ut exinde et confluentium illuc piscium, præsertim vero salmonum (quorum et frequentissima et copiosissima ab eo tempore per universum fluvium fit captura) ascensui non obsistat, et nihilominus subjecto vertici adeo promineat, ut videatur a naturalibus contra impetuose ruentis fluvii ictum, magis sancti viri merito, quam innata agilitate conscendi."—O'Donnell, *Vita Quinta*, book ii. c. 92. The river here spoken of is the Erne, a river of Ulster, which throws itself into the sea after having crossed the two great lakes called Lough Erne. In recollection of this benefit the historian tells us that all the produce of the fisheries on St. Columba's day was left for the *coarb*—that is to say, for the abbot, who held the first rank among the successors of the saint in the monasteries he had founded.

touching expression of popular and national gratitude for the services which the great monk rendered to the country, by teaching the peasants to search for the fountains, to regulate the irrigations, and to rectify the course of the rivers, as so many other holy monks have done in all European lands.

It is equally apparent that he had with zeal and success established the system of grafting and the culture of fruit-trees, when we read the legend which represents him to us, at the beginning of his monastic career in Durrow, the most ancient of his foundations, approaching, in autumn, a tree covered with sour and unwholesome fruit, to bless it, and saying, "In the name of Almighty God, let thy bitterness leave thee, O bitter tree, and let thy apples be henceforward as sweet as up to this time they have been sour!"[1] At other times he is said to have obtained for his friends quick and abundant harvests, enabling them, for example, to cut barley in August which they had sown in June—a thing which then seemed a miracle, but is not without parallel in Scotland at the present time.[2] Thus almost invariably the recollection of a service rendered, or of a benefit asked or spontaneously conferred, weds itself in the legend to the story of miracles and outbursts of wonder-working prayer —which, in most cases, were for the benefit of the cultivators of the soil; it is evident that he studied their necessities and followed their vicissitudes with untiring sympathy.

[1] "Quædam arbor valde pomosa . . . de qua cum incolæ loci quoddam haberent pro nimia fructus amaritudine querimonium. . . . Vident lignum incassum abundos habere fructus qui ex eis gustantes plus læderent quam delectarent. . . . In nomine omnipotentis Dei, omnis tua amaritudo, e arbor amara, a te recedat; tua huc usque amarissima nunc in dulcissima vertantur poma. . . . Dicto citius eodemque momento, omnia poma . . . in miram versa sunt dulcedinem."—ADAMNAN, ii. 2. "Arborem plenam fructu qui erat hominibus inutilis præ nimia amaritudine," it is said in a similar legend told of another Irish saint, Mochoënoroc.—Ap. COLGAN, *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*, p. 592.

[2] *New Statistical Account*, cited by REEVES, p. 459.

In the same spirit he studied and sought remedies for the infectious diseases which threatened life, or which made ravages among the cattle of the country. Seated one day upon a hillock in his island, he said to the monk who was with him, and who belonged to the Dalriadian colony, "Look at that thick and rainy cloud which comes from the north; it has with it the germs of a deadly sickness; it is about to fall upon a large district of our Ireland, bringing ulcers and sores upon the body of man and beast. We must have pity on our brethren. Quick, let us go down, and to-morrow thou shalt embark and go to their aid." The monk obeyed, and furnished with bread which Columba had blessed, he went over all the district smitten by the pestilence, distributing to the first sick persons he met, water, in which the bread blessed by the exiled abbot, who concerned himself so anxiously about the lot of his countrymen, had been steeped. The remedy worked so well, that from all parts both men and beasts crowded round the messenger of Iona, and the praises of Christ and His servant Columba resounded far and wide.[1]

Thus we see the saint continually on the watch for those evils, losses, and accidents which struck the families or nations specially interesting to him, and which were revealed to him either by a supernatural intuition or by some plaintive appeal. Sometimes we find him sending the blessed bread, which was his favourite remedy, to a holy girl who had broken her leg in returning from mass; sometimes curing others of ophthalmia by means of salt also blessed; everywhere on his evangelical journeys, or other

[1] "Hæc nubes valde nocua hominibus et pecoribus erit . . . velocius transvolans super Scotiæ portum . . . purulenta humanis in corporibus et in pecorum uberibus nasci faciet ulcera. . . . Sed nos eorum miserati subvenire languoribus, Domino miserante, debemus. Tu ergo, nunc mecum descendens, navigationem præpara crastina die. . . . Cujus rumor per totam illam morbo pestilentiore vastatam regionem cito divulgatus, omnem morbidum ad sancti Columbæ legatum invitavit populum . . . homines cum pecudibus salvati Christum in sancto Columba laudarunt."—ADAMNAN, ii. 7.

expeditions, we are witnesses of his desire, and the pains he took, to heal all the sick that were brought to him, or who awaited him on the roadside, eager, like the little idiot of Clonmacnoise, to touch the border of his robe—an accompaniment which had followed him during the whole course of his journey to the national assembly of Drumceitt.[1]

His entire life bears the marks of his ardent sympathy for the labourers in the fields. From the time of his early travels as a young man in Ireland, when he furnished the ploughmen with ploughshares, and had the young men trained to the trade of blacksmith,[2] up to the days of his old age, when he could only follow far off the labour of his monks, his paternal tenderness never ceased to exercise on their account its salutary and beneficent influence. Seated in a little wooden hut which answered the purpose of a cell, he interrupted his studies, and put down his pen, to bless the monks as they came back from the fields, the pastures, or the barns. The younger brethren, after having milked the cows of the community, knelt down, with their pails full of new milk, to receive from a distance the abbot's blessing, sometimes accompanied by an exhortation useful to their souls.[3] During one of the last summers of his life, the monks, returning in the evening from reaping the scanty harvest of their island, stopped short as they approached the monastery,

[1] "Maugina, sancta virgo . . . ab oratorio post missam domum reversa titubavit. . . . Sorori et suæ nutrici profecturam quæ ophthalmiæ laborabat valde gravi labore. . . . Diversorum languores infirmorum invocato Christi nomine, sanavit . . . ad regum pergens condictum in Dorsi Cete. Aut sanctæ manus protensione . . . aut etiam fimbriæ ejus tactu amphibali."—ADAMNAN, ii. 5, 6, 7, 35.

[2] "Conquerentibus agricolis deesse ad arandum ferramenta, amissum aratri vomerem (restituit); juvenem quemdam . . . nunquam alias fabrilibus assuetum solo verbo protinus ferramentorum fabrum effecit; qui mox ad sancti imperium pro colonis vomerem, cultrumque faberrime cudit."—O'DONNELL, *Quinta Vita*, i. 68.

[3] "Sedens in tuguriolo tabulis suffulto. . . . Juvenis ad januam tugurioli in quo vir beatus scribebat, post vaccarum reversus mulsionem, in dorso portans vasculum novo plenum lacte, dicit ad sanctum ut juxta morem tale benediceret onus."—ADAMNAN, i. 25, ii. 16, iii. 22.

suddenly touched with strange emotion. The steward of the monastery, Baithen, the friend and future successor of Columba, asked them, "Are you not sensible of something very unusual here?" "Yes," said the oldest of the monks, "every day, at this hour and place, I breathe a delicious odour, as if all the flowers in the world were collected here. I feel also something like the flame of the hearth, which does not burn but warms me gently; I experience, in short, in my heart a joy so unusual, so incomparable, that I am no longer sensible of either trouble or fatigue. The sheaves which I carry on my back, though heavy, weigh upon me no longer; and I know not how, from this spot to the monastery, they seem to be lifted from my shoulders. What, then, is this wonder?" All the others gave the same account of their sensations. "I will tell you what it is," said the steward; "it is our old master, Columba, always full of anxiety for us, who is disturbed to find us so late, who vexes himself with the thought of our fatigue, and who, not being able to come to meet us with his body, sends us his spirit to refresh, rejoice, and console us."[1]

It must not be supposed, however, that he reserved his solicitude for his monastic labourers alone. Far from that, he knew how to appreciate the work of laymen when sanctified by Christian virtue. "See," he said one day to the elders of the monastery, "at this moment while I speak, such a one

[1] "Post messionis opera vespere ad monasterium redeuntes. . . . Quamdam miri odoris fragrantiam ac si universorum florum in unum sentio collectorum; quanquam quoque quasi ignis ardorem, non pœnalem, sed quodam modo suavem; sed et quamdam in corde insuetam et incomparabilem infusam lætificationem, quæ me subito consolatur et lætificat ita ut nullius mœroris, nullius laboris meminisse possim. Sed et onus quod meo, quanquam grave, porto in dorso, ab hoc loco usque ad monasterium, in tantum relevatur, ut me oneratum non sentiam. . . . Sic omnes operarii sed singillatim profitentur. . . . Scitis quod senior noster Columba de nos anxie cogitet et nos ad se tardius pervenientes ægre ferat nostri memor laboris, et idcirco quia corporaliter obviam nobis non venit, spiritus ejus nostris obviat gressibus, qui taliter nos consolans lætificat."—ADAMNAN, i. 37.

who was a blacksmith yonder in Ireland—see him, how he goes up to heaven! He dies an old man, and he has worked all his life; but he has not worked in vain. He has bought eternal life with the work of his hands; for he dispensed all his gains in alms; and I see the angels who are going for his soul."[1] It will be admitted that the praise of manual labour, carried to a silly length in our days, has been rarely expressed in a manner so solemn and touching.

It is also recorded that he took pleasure in the society of laymen during his journeys, and lived among them with a free and delightful familiarity. This is one of the most attractive and instructive phases of his history. He continually asked and received the hospitality not only of the rich, but also of the poor; and sometimes, indeed, received a more cordial reception from the poor than from the rich. To those who refused him a shelter he predicted prompt punishment. "That miser," he said, "who despises Christ in the person of a traveller, shall see his wealth diminish from day to day and come to nothing; he will come to beggary, and his son shall go from door to door holding out his hand, which shall never be more than half filled."[2] When the poor received him under their roof, he inquired with his ordinary thoughtfulness into their resources, their necessities, all their little possessions. At that period a man seems to have been considered very poor in Scotland who had only five cows. This was all the fortune of a Lochaber peasant in whose house Columba, who continually traversed this district when going to visit the king of the Picts, passed a night, and found a very cordial welcome notwithstanding the poverty of the house. Next morning he had the five little cows brought

[1] "Faber ferrarius non incessum laboravit, qui de propria manuum laboratione suarum præmia felix comparuit æterna. Ecce nunc anima ejus vehitur a sanctis angelis ad cœlestis patriæ gaudia."—ADAMNAN, iii. 9.

[2] "De quodam viro divite tenacissimo . . . qui sanctum Columbam despexerat nec eum hospitio receperat . . . et illius avari divitiæ, qui Christum in peregrinis hospitibus sprevit. . . . Ipse mendicabit, et filius cum semivacua de domo in domum perula discurret."—ADAMNAN, ii. 20.

into his presence and blessed them, predicting to his host that he should soon have five hundred, and that the blessing of the grateful missionary should go down to his children and grandchildren—a prophecy which was faithfully fulfilled.[1]

In the same district of Lochaber, which is still the scene of those great deer-stalking expeditions in which the British aristocracy delight, our saint was one day accosted by an unfortunate poacher, who had not the means of maintaining his wife and children, and who asked alms from him. "Poor man," said Columba, "go and cut me a rod in the forest." When the rod was brought to him, the abbot of Iona himself sharpened it into the form of a spear. When he had done this he blessed the improvised javelin, and gave it to his suppliant, telling him that if he kept it carefully, and used it only against wild beasts, venison should never be wanting in his poor house. This prophecy also was fulfilled. The poacher planted his blessed spear in a distant corner of the forest, and no day passed that he did not find there a hart or doe, or other game, so that he soon had enough to sell to his neighbours as well as to provide for all the necessities of his own house.[2]

[1] "Hic Nesanus cum esset valde inops . . . hospitaliter et secundum vires unius noctis spatio ministrasset . . . ab eo inquirit cujus boculas numeri haberet . . . quinque. . . . Ab hac die tuæ paucæ vaculæ crescent usque ad centum et quinque vaccarum numerum. Nesanus homo plebeius erat cum uxore et filiis. . . . Vir sanctus, quadam nocte quum apud supramemoratum . . . inopem bene hospitaretur, mane primo de quantitate et qualitate substantiæ plebeium hospitem interrogat."—ADAMNAN, ii. 21. The district of Lochaber, celebrated in the modern wars of Scotland, is situated upon the borders of the counties of Argyle and Inverness, on the way from Iona to the residence of the Pictish king, and was consequently often crossed by Columba.

[2] "Plebcius pauperrimus, mendicus . . . quo unde maritam et parvulos cibaret non habebat quadam nocte. . . . Miselle homuncio, tolle de silva contulum vicina et ad me cujus defer. . . . Quem sanctus excipiens in veru exacuit propria manu, benedicens et illi assignans inopi. . . . Quamdiu talem habebis sudem, nunquam in domo tua cervinæ carnis cibatio abundans deerit. Miser mendiculus . . . valde gavisus . . . veru in remotis infexit terrulæ

Columba thus interested himself in all that he saw, in all that went on around him, and which he could turn to the profit of the poor or of his fellow-creatures; even in hunting or fishing he took pains to point out the happy moment and most favourable spot where the largest salmon or pike might be found.[1] Wherever he found himself in contact with the poor or with strangers, he drew them to himself and comforted them even more by the warm sympathy of his generous heart than by material benefits. He identified himself with their fears, their dangers, and their vexations. Always a peacemaker and consoler, he took advantage here of the night's shelter given him by a rich mountaineer to end a dispute between two angry neighbours;[2] and there made a chance meeting in a Highland gorge with a countryman an occasion for reassuring the peasant as to the consequences of the ravages made in his district by Pictish or Saxon invaders. "My good man," he said, "thy poor cattle and thy little all have fallen into the hands of the robbers; but thy dear little family is safe—go home and be comforted."[3]

Such was this tender and gentle soul. His charity might sometimes seem to have degenerated into feebleness, so great was the pleasure he took in all the details of benevolence and Christian brotherhood; but let there appear an injustice to repair, an unfortunate individual to defend, an oppressor

locis, quæ silvestres frequentabant feræ . . . nulla transire poterat dies in quo non aut cervum aut cervam reperiret in veru infixo cecidisse."—ADAMNAN, ii. 37.

[1] *Ibid.*, ii. 19.

[2] "In domo cujus plebeii divitis. . . . Fortgini nomine . . . ubi cum sanctus hospitaretur, inter rusticanos contendentes duos . . . recta judicatione judicavit."—*Ibid.*, ii. 17.

[3] "Ubi, ait, habitas . . . tuam quam dicis provinciolam nunc barbari populantur vastatores. Quo audito, miser plebeius maritam et filios deplangere cœpit. Valde mœrentem consolans inquit: Vade, homuncule vade, tua familiola tota in montem fugiens evasit: tua vero omnia pecuscula . . . omnemque supellectilem cum præda sævi raptores rapuere."—*Ibid.*, i. 46.

to punish, an outrage against humanity or misfortune to avenge, and Columba immediately awoke and displayed all the energy of his youth. The former man reappeared in a moment; his passionate temperament recovered the mastery —his distinctive character, vehement in expression and resolute in action, burst forth at every turn; and his natural boldness led him, in the face of all dangers, to lavish remonstrances, invectives, and threats, which the justice of God, too rarely visible in such cases, sometimes deigned to fulfil.

Among the many sufferers whom he found on his way, it is natural to suppose that the exiles, who were so numerous in consequence of the discords which rent the Celtic races, would most of all call forth his sympathy. Himself an exile, he was the natural protector of all who were exiled.[1] He took under his special guardianship a banished Pict, of noble family, probably one of those who had received him with kindness, and listened to his teachings at the time of his first missions in Northern Caledonia. Columba confided, or, as the historian says, recommended, assigned, *in manum*, according to the custom which came to be general in feudal times, his banished friend to a chief called Feradagh, who occupied the large island of Islay, south of Iona, praying him to conceal his guest for some months among his clan and dependents. A few days after he had solemnly accepted the trust, this villain had the noble exile treacherously murdered, no doubt for the sake of the articles of value he had with him. When he received the news, Columba cried, "It is not to me, it is to God, that this wretched man, whose name shall be effaced out of the book of life, has lied. It is summer now, but before autumn comes—before he can eat of the meat which he is fattening for his table—he shall die a

[1] "Almus pater, exsulum et depressorum pius patronus," says Manus O'Donnell (b. ii. c. 3), who was at once the grandnephew and biographer of the saint, with a sentiment only too natural in a scion of one of those great Irish families which have always preferred exile and destitution to apostasy.

sudden death, and be dragged to hell." The indignant old man's prophecy was reported to Feradagh, who pretended to laugh at it, but nevertheless kept it in his mind. Before the beginning of autumn, he ordered a fattened pig to be killed and roasted, and even before the animal was entirely cooked gave orders that part of it should be served to him in order to prove, at the earliest possible moment, the falsehood of the prophesied vengeance. But scarcely had he taken up the morsel, when, before he had carried it to his mouth, he fell back and died. Those who were present admired and trembled to see how the Lord God honoured and justified His prophet;[1] and those who knew Columba's life as a young man recalled to each other how, at the very beginning of his monastic life, the murderer of the innocent maiden had fallen dead at the sound of his avenging voice.[2]

In his just wrath against the spoilers of the poor and the persecutors of the Church, he drew back before no danger, not even before the assassin's dagger. Among the reivers who infested Scottish Caledonia, making armed incursions into their neighbours' lands, and carrying on that system of pillage which, up to the eighteenth century, continued to characterise the existence of the Scottish clans, he had distinguished the sons of Donnell, who belonged to a branch of the family which ruled the Dalriadian colony. Columba did not hesitate to excommunicate them. Exasperated by

[1] "Quemdam de nobili Pictorum genere exsulem, in manum alicujus Feradachi divitis viri . . . diligenter assignans commendavit, ut in ejus comitatu, quasi unus de amicis, aliquos menses conversaretur. Quem cum tali commendatione de sancti manu viri commendatum suscepisset . . . trucidavit. . . . Non mihi, sed Deo infelix homunculus mentitus est, cujus nomen de libro vitæ delebitur. . . . Antequam de suilla degustet carne arboreo saginata fructu. . . . Despiciens irrisit sanctum. Scrofa nucum impinguata nucleis jugulatur . . . de qua celeriter ex interita partem sibi in veru celerius assari præcipit, ut de ea impatiens prægustans beati viri prophetationem destrueret . . . ad quam extensam manum priusquam ad os converteret . . . mortuus retro in dorsum cecidit. . . . Valde tremefacti, admirantes, Christum in sancto propheta honorificantes glorificarunt."—ADAMNAN, ii. 23.

[2] See *ante*, page 12.

this sentence, one of these powerful ill-doers, named or surnamed Lamm-Dess (*Right-hand*), took advantage of a visit which the great abbot paid to a distant island, and undertook to murder him in his sleep. But Finn-Lugh, one of the saint's companions, having had some suspicion or instinctive presentiment of danger, and desiring to save his father's life by the sacrifice of his own, borrowed Columba's cowl, and wrapped himself in it. The assassin struck him whom he found clothed in the well-known costume of the abbot, and then fled. But the sacred vestment proved impenetrable armour to the generous disciple, who was not even wounded. Columba, when informed of the event, said nothing at the moment. But a year after, when he had returned to Iona, the abbot said to his community, "A year ago Lamm-Dess did his best to murder my dear Finn-Lugh in my place; now at this moment it is he who is being killed." And, in fact, the news shortly arrived that the assassin had just died under the sword of a warrior, who struck the fatal blow while invoking the name of Columba, in a fight which brought the depredations of these reivers to an end.[1]

Some time before, another criminal of the same family, called Joan, had chosen for his victim one of the hosts of Columba, one of those poor men whom the abbot had enriched by his blessing in exchange for the hospitality which even in their poverty they had not refused. This poor man lived on the wild and barren peninsula of Ardnamurchan, a sombre mass which rises up out of the waves of the Atlantic, and forms the most western point of the Scottish mainland. The benediction of the missionary had brought him good

[1] "In insula Himba commoratus. . . . Ille vero sceleratus, cujus nomen latine *Manus dextera* dicitur. . . . Usque in hanc diem integratus est annus ex quo Lamm Dess in quantum potuit Finn Lughum meum meo jugulavit vice; sed et ipse, ut æstimo, hac in hora jugulatur. In aliqua virorum utrinque acta belligeratione, Cronani, filii Baithani jaculo transfixus in nomine, ut fertur, sancti Columbæ, emisso, interimit, et post ejus interitum viri belligerare cessarunt."—ADAMNAN, ii. 24.

fortune, as had been the case with the peasant of Lochaber, and his five cows, too, had multiplied, and were then more than a hundred in number. Columba was not satisfied with merely enriching his humble friend, but gave him also a place in his affections, and had even bestowed upon him his own name; so that all his neighbours called him *Columbain*, the friend of St. Columba. Three times in succession, Joan, the princely spoiler, had pillaged and ravaged the house of the enriched peasant, the friend of the abbot of Iona; the third time, as he went back with his bravos, laden with booty, to the boat which awaited him on the beach, he met the great abbot, whom he had supposed far distant. Columba reproved him for his exactions and crimes, and entreated him to give up his prey; but the reiver continued his course, and answered only by an immovable silence, until he had gained the beach and entered his boat. As soon as he was in his vessel, he began to answer the abbot's prayers by mockeries and insults. Then the noble old man plunged into the sea, up to his knees, as if to cling to the boat which contained the spoils of his friend; and when it went off he remained for some time with his two hands raised towards heaven, praying with ardour. When his prayer was ended, he came out of the water, and returned to his companions, who were seated on a neighbouring mound, to dry himself. After a pause, he said to them, "This miserable man, this evil-doer, who despises Christ in His servants, shall never more land upon the shore from which you have seen him depart—he shall never touch land again. To-day a little cloud begins to rise in the north, and from that cloud comes a tempest that shall swallow him up, him and his; not one single soul shall escape to tell the tale." The day was fine, the sea calm, and the sky perfectly serene. Notwithstanding, the cloud which Columba had announced soon appeared; and the spectators, turning their eyes to the sea, saw the tempest gather, increase, and pursue the spoiler. The storm reached them between the islands of Mull and

Colonsay, from whose shores their boat was seen to sink and perish, with all its crew and all its spoils.[1]

We have all read in Cæsar's Commentaries how, when he landed on the shores of Britain, the standard-bearer of the tenth legion threw himself into the sea, up to the knees in water, to encourage his comrades. Thanks to the perverse complaisance of history for all feats of force, this incident is immortal. Cæsar, however, moved by depraved ambition, came but to oppress a free and innocent race, and to bring it under the odious yoke of Roman tyranny, of which, happily, it has retained no trace. How much grander and more worthy of recollection, I do not say to every Christian, but to every upright soul, is the sight offered to us at the other extremity of the great Britannic Isle, by this old monk, who also rushed into the sea, up to his knees—but to pursue a savage oppressor, in the interest of an obscure victim, thus claiming for himself, under his legendary aureole, the everlasting greatness of humanity, justice, and pity!

[1] "Columbanum, quem de paupere virtus benedictionis ejus ditem fecit, valde diligebat. . . . Quidam malefactor homo, bonorum persecutor . . . prosequebatur sancti amicum Columbæ. . . . Accidit ut tertia vice . . . beatum virum, quem quasi longius positum despexerat, ad navem revertens mœste obviam haberet. . . . Immitis et insuadibilis permanens . . . navimque cum præda ascendens, beatum virum subsannabat et deridebat. Quem sanctus ad mare usque prosecutus est, vitreasque intrans aquas usque ad genua æquoreas, levatis ad cœlum ambis manibus, Christum intente precatur. . . . Hic miserabilis homuncio, qui Christum in suis despexit servis, ad portum, a quo nuper coram vobis emigravit, nunquam revertetur; sed nec ad alias quas appetit, terras . . . cum suis perveniet malis cooperatoribus. Hodie, quam mox videbitis, de nube a borea orta immitis immissa procella eum cum sociis submerget: nec de eis etiam unus remanebit fabulator. . . . Die serenissima, et ecce de mari oborta, sicut sanctus dixerat, nubes cum magno fragore venti emissa, raptorem cum præda inter Maleam et Colonsam insulas inveniens . . . submersit." —ADAMNAN, ii. 22.

CHAPTER VII

COLUMBA'S LAST YEARS—HIS DEATH—HIS CHARACTER

Columba the confidant of the joys and consoler of the sorrows of domestic life.—He blesses little Hector with the fair locks.—He prays for a woman in her delivery; he reconciles the wife of a pilot to her husband.—Vision of the saved wife who receives her husband in heaven.—He continues his missions to the end of his life.—Visions before death.—The Angels' Hill.—Increase of austerities.—Nettle-soup his sole food.—A supernatural light surrounds him during his nightly work and prayers.—His death is retarded for four years by the prayers of the community.—When this respite has expired, he takes leave of the monks at their work; he visits and blesses the granaries of the monastery.—He announces his death to his attendant Diarmid.—His farewell to his old white horse.—Last benediction to the isle of Iona; last work of transcription; last message to his community.—He dies in the church.—Review of his life and character.

By the side of the terrible acts of vengeance which have just been narrated, the student loves to find in this bold enemy of the wicked and the oppressor a gentle and familiar sympathy for all the affections as well as all the trials of domestic life. Rich and poor, kings and peasants, awoke in his breast the same kindly emotion, expressed with the same fulness. When King Aïdan brought his children to him, and spoke of his anxiety about their future lives, he did not content himself with seeing the eldest. "Have you none younger?" said the abbot; "bring them all—let me hold them in my arms and on my heart!" And when the younger children were brought, one fair-haired boy, Hector (Eochaidh Buidhe), came forward running, and threw himself upon the saint's knees.

Columba held him long pressed to his heart, then kissed his forehead, blessed him, and prophesied for him a long life, a prosperous reign, and a great posterity.[1]

Let us listen while his biographer tells how he came to the aid of a woman in extremity, and how he made peace in a divided household. One day at Iona he suddenly stopped short while reading, and said with a smile to his monks, "I must now go and pray for a poor little woman who is in the pains of childbirth and suffers like a true daughter of Eve. She is down yonder in Ireland, and reckons upon my prayers, for she is my kinswoman, and of my mother's family." Upon this he hastened to the church, and when his prayer was ended returned to his brethren, saying—"She is delivered. The Lord Jesus, who deigned to be born of a woman, has come to her aid; this time she will not die."[2]

Another day, while he was visiting an island on the Irish coast, a pilot came to him to complain of his wife, who had taken an aversion for him. The abbot called her

[1] "Sed nunc si alios juniores habes, ad me veniant, et quem ex eis elegerit Dominus regem, subito super meum irruit gremium . . . quibus accessis. . . . Echodius Buidhe adveniens in sinu ejus recubuit. Statimque sanctus eum osculatus benedixit."—ADAMNAN, i. 9. Columba had predicted that none of the four elder sons of the king should succeed him, and that they should all perish in war. The three eldest were actually killed in the battle for which Columba had rung the bells of his new monastery (see *ante*, page 70), and the fourth also died sword in hand "in Saxonia bellica, in strage." The kings of Scotland, whose lineage is traced to the Dalriadians, were probably descendants of the fair-haired Hector.

[2] "A lectione surgit et subridens ait: Nunc ad oratorium mihi properandum est ut pro quadam misellula deprecer femina, quæ nunc in Hibernia nomen hujus inclamitans commemorat Columbæ, in magnis parturitionis, ut filia Evæ, difficillimæ torta punitionibus . . . quia et mihi cognationis est . . . de parentela matris meæ. . . . Ad ecclesiam currit. . . . Nunc propitius Dominus Jesus, de muliere progenitus, opportune miseræ subveniens, prospere prolem peperit; nec hac vice morietur. Eadem hora, nomen ejus invocans, absoluta salutem recuperavit. Ita ab aliquibus postea de Scotia et de eadem regione ubi mulier inhabitabat, transmeantibus, intimatum est."—ADAMNAN, ii. 40.

and reminded her of the duties imposed upon her by the law of the Lord. "I am ready to do everything," said the woman—"I will obey you in the hardest things you can command. I do not draw back from any of the cares of the house. I will go even, if it is desired, on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or I will shut myself up in a nunnery—in short, I will do everything except live with him."

The abbot answered that there could be no question of pilgrimage or of a convent so long as her husband lived; "but," he added, "let us try to pray God, all three, fasting—you, your husband, and myself."

"Ah," said the woman, "I know that you can obtain even what is impossible from God." However, his proposal was carried out—the three fasted, and Columba passed the whole night in prayer without ever closing his eyes. Next morning he said to the woman, with the gentle irony which he so often employed, "Tell me to what convent are you bound after your yesterday's projects?" "To none," said the woman; "my heart has been changed to-night. I know not how I have passed from hate to love." And from that day until the hour of her death she lived in a tender and faithful union with her husband.[1]

But Columba fortunately was connected with other households more united, where he could admire the happiness of his friends without feeling himself compelled to

[1] "De quodam guberneta. . . . De sua querebatur uxore quæ . . . eum ad maritalem nullo modo admittebat concubitum. . . . Omnia quæcumque mihi præceperis, sum parata, quamlibet sint valde laboriosa, adimplere, excepto uno, ut me nullo modo in uno lecto dormire cum Lugneo. Omnem domus curam exercere non recuso, aut etiam si jubeas, maria transiens in aliquo puellarum monasterio permanere. . . . Scio quod tibi impossibile non erit ut ea quæ . . . vel impossibilia videmus, a Deo impetrata donentur. . . . Nocte subsequenti sanctus insomnis pro eis deprecatus est. . . . O femina, si, ut hesterna dicebas die, parata hodie es ad feminarum emigrare monasteriolum? . . . Nunc quem heri oderam, hodie amo: cor enim meum hac nocte præterita, quo modo ignoro, in me immutatum est de odio in amorem. . . . Anima ejusdem maritæ indissociabiliter in amore conglutinata est mariti, ut illa maritalis concubitus debita . . . nullo modo deinceps recusaret."—ADAMNAN, ii. 41.

make peace. From his sanctuary at Iona his habitual solicitude and watchful sympathy followed them to their last hour. One day he was alone with one of the Saxons whom he had converted and attached to his community, and who was the baker of the monks; while this stranger prepared his bread, he heard the abbot say, looking up to heaven — "Oh! happy, happy woman! She goes into heaven with a guard of angels." Exactly a year after, the abbot and the Saxon baker were again together. "I see the woman," said Columba, "of whom I spoke to thee last year coming down from heaven to meet the soul of her husband, who has just died. She contends with powerful enemies for that dear soul; by the help of the holy angels she gains the day, she triumphs, because her goodman has been a just man—and the two are united again in the home of everlasting consolation."[1]

This vision was preceded and followed by many others of the same description, in which the blessed death of many bishops and monks, his friends and contemporaries, were announced to him. They seem to have been intended to give him a glimpse of that heaven into which God was shortly to call him. Nor was it only at Iona that these supernatural graces were accorded to him, for he did not limit his unwearied activity to the narrow enclosure of that island, any more in the decline of his life than in the earlier period of his emigration. Up to old age he continued to have sufficient strength and courage to return to the most northern regions where he had preached the faith to the Picts; and it was in one of his last missionary journeys,

[1] "Quidam religiosus frater, Genereus nomine, Saxo, pistor, opus pistorum exercens. . . . Felix mulier, felix bene morata, cujus animam nunc angeli Dei ad paradisum evehunt. . . . Ecce mulier, de qua te præsente dixeram præterito anno. Nunc mariti sui religiosi cujusdam plebeii in aere obviat animæ, et cum sanctis angelis contra æmulas pro eo belligerat potestates; quorum adminiculo ejusdem homuncionis justitia suffragante, a dæmoniacis belligerationibus erepta, ad æternæ refrigerationis locum anima ipsius est perducta."—ADAMNAN, iii. 10.

when upon the banks of Loch Ness, to the north of the great line of waters which cuts Caledonia in two, at a distance of fifty leagues from Iona, that he was permitted to see the angels come to meet the soul of the old Pict, who, faithful during all his life to the law of nature, received baptism, and with it eternal salvation, from the great missionary's hands.[1]

At this period the angels, whom he saw carrying to heaven the soul of the just and penitent, and aiding the believing wife to make an entrance there for her husband, continually appeared to him and hovered about him. Making all possible allowance for the exaggerations and fables which the proverbial credulity of Celtic nations have added to the legends of their saints,[2] no Christian will be tempted to deny the verified narratives which bear witness, in Columba's case as well as in that of the other saints, to supernatural appearances which enriched his life, and especially his old age. Those wonderful soldiers of virtue and Christian truth needed such miracles to help them to support the toils and live through the trials of their dangerous mission. They required to ascend from time to time into celestial regions to find strength there for their continual struggle against all obstacles and perils and continually renewed temptations—and to learn to brave the enmities, the savage manners, and blind hatreds of the nations whom it was the aim of their lives to set free.

[1] See *ante*, page 64. "Ultra Britanniæ Dorsum iter agens, secus Nisæ fluminis lacum . . . sanctus senex."—ADAMNAN, iii. 14.

[2] Let us quote on this point, from the most illustrious of hagiographers, Bollandus himself, in his prefatory remarks to the life of the first Irish saint who came before him: "Multa continet admiranda portenta, sed usitata apud gentem illam simplicem et sanctam; neque sacris dogmatibus aut Dei erga electos suos suavissimæ providentiæ repugnantia; sunt tamen fortassis nonnulla imperitorum libratorum culpa vitiata aut amplificata. Quod in gentilium suorum rebus gestis animadverti oportere nos docuit Henricus Fitzsimon societatis nostræ theologus, egregio rerum usu præditus. . . . Satis est lectorem monuisse ut cum discretione ea legat quæ prodigiosa, et crebro similia miracula commemorant, nisi ab sapientibus scripta auctoribus sunt."—*Acta Sanctorum*, January, vol. i. p. 43.

"Let no one follow me to-day," Columba said one morning, with unusual severity, to the assembled community: "I would be alone in the little plain to the west of the isle." He was obeyed; but a brother, more curious and less obedient than the rest, followed him far off, and saw him, erect and motionless, with his hands and his eyes raised to heaven, standing on a sandy hillock, where he was soon surrounded by a crowd of angels, who came to bear him company and to talk with him. The hill has to this day retained the name of the Angels' Hill.[1] And the citizens of the celestial country, as they were called at Iona, came often to console and strengthen their future companion during the long winter nights which he passed in prayer in some retired corner, voluntarily exposed to all the torments of sleeplessness and cold.[2]

For as he approached the end of his career this great servant of God consumed his strength in vigils, fasts, and dangerous macerations. His life, which had been so full of generous struggles, hard trial, and toil in the service of God and his neighbour, seemed to him neither full enough nor pure enough. In proportion as the end drew near he redoubled his austerities and mortifications. Every night, according to one of his biographers, he plunged into cold water and remained there for the time necessary to recite an entire psalter.[3] One day, when, bent by age, he sought,

[1] *Cnocan Aingel* (colliculus Angelorum), in the map of the island by Graham.

[2] "Cum ingenti animadversione dixit: Hodie . . . solus exire cupio, nemo itaque ex vobis me sequatur. . . . Cœlestis patriæ cives . . . sanctum virum orantem circumstare . . . albatis induti vestibus, et post aliquam sermocinationem cum beato viro. . . . Quantæ et quales ad beatum virum in hyemalibus plerumque noctibus insomnem, et in locis remotioribus, aliis quiescentibus, orantem, angelicæ fuerint et suaves frequentationes."—ADAMNAN, iii. 16.

[3] O'DONNELL, iii. 37. This incredible power of supporting cold in the damp and icy climate of the British Isles is one of the most marked features in the penances which the Irish saints inflicted on themselves. —See COLGAN, *Acta SS. Hiberniæ*.

perhaps in a neighbouring island, a retirement still more profound than usual, in which to pray, he saw a poor woman gathering wild herbs and even nettles, who told him that her poverty was such as to forbid her all other food. Upon which the old abbot reproached himself bitterly that he had not yet come to that point. "See," he said, "this poor woman, who finds her miserable life worth the trouble of being thus prolonged; and we, who profess to deserve heaven by our austerities, we live in luxury!" When he went back to his monastery he gave orders that he should be served with no other food than the wild and bitter herbs with which the beggar supported her existence; and he severely reproved his minister, Diarmid,[1] who had come from Ireland with him, when he, out of compassion for his master's old age and weakness, threw a little butter into the caldron in which this miserable fare was cooked.[2]

The celestial light which was soon to receive him began already to surround him like a garment or a shroud. His monks told each other that the solitary cell in the isle of Himba, near Iona, which he had built for himself, was lighted up every night by a great light, which could be seen through the chinks of the door and keyhole, while the abbot chanted unknown canticles till daybreak. After having remained there three days and nights without food, he came out, full of joy at having discovered the mysterious meaning of several texts of Holy Scripture, which up to

[1] MS. quoted by Reeves, p. 245, Appendix. The name of Diarmid or Diormid—the same as that of the king against whom Columba raised a civil war—was at a later date changed into that of Dermott, which is still to be found among the Irish.

[2] "Cum senio jam gravatus in quodam secessu ab aliis remotiori orationi vocali intentus deambularet. . . . Ecce paupercula hæc femina. . . . Et quid nos qui . . . laxius vivimus? . . . Diermitius . . . qui debebat eam misellam escam parare . . . per fistulam instillatoriam modicum liquefacti butyri et ollæ . . . infudit. . . . Sic Christi miles ultimam senectutem in continua carnis maceratione usque ad exitum . . . perduxit."—O'Donnell, *Vita Quinta*, iii. 32.

that time he had not understood.[1] When he returned to Iona to die, continuing faithful to his custom of spending a great part of the night in prayer, he bore about with him everywhere the miraculous light which already surrounded him like the nimbus of his holiness. The entire community was involuntarily agitated by the enjoyment of that foretaste of paradise. One winter's night, a young man who was destined to succeed Columba as fourth abbot of Iona remained in the church while the others slept: all at once he saw the abbot come in preceded by a golden light which fell from the heights of the vaulted roof, and lighted all the corners of the building, even including the little lateral oratory where the young monk hid himself in alarm.[2] All who passed during the night before the church, while their old abbot prayed, were startled by this light, which dazzled them like lightning.[3] Another of the young monks, whose education was specially directed by the abbot himself, resolved to ascertain whether the same illumination existed in Columba's cell; and notwithstanding that he had been expressly forbidden to do so, he got up in the night and went groping to the door of the cell to look in, but fled immediately, blinded by the light that filled it.[4]

[1] "De qua domo immensæ claritatis radii, per rimulas valvarum et clavium foramina, erumpentes, noctu videbantur. Carmina quoque spiritalia et ante inaudita decantari ab eo audiebantur. . . . Scripturarum . . . quæque obscura et difficillima, plana et luce clarius aperta, mundissimi cordis oculis patebant."—ADAMNAN, iii. 18.

[2] "Simulque cum eo (ingreditur) aurea lux, de cœli altitudine descendens, totum illud ecclesiæ spatium replens . . . et penetrans usque in illius exedriolæ separatum conclave ubi se Virgnous in quantum potuit latitare conabatur . . . exterritus."—*Ibid.*, iii. 19. Virgnous, or Fergna Brit, fourth abbot of Iona, from 605 to 625. He told this incident to his nephew, by whom it was told to Adamnan.

[3] "Fulguralis lux."—*Ibid.* iii. 20.

[4] "Cuidam suo sapientiam discenti alumno . . . qui, contra interdictum, in noctis silentio accessit . . . callide explorans . . . oculos ad clavium foramina posuit. . . . Repletum hospitiolum cœlestis splendore claritudinis, quam non sustinens intueri, aufugit."—*Ibid.*, iii. 20.

These signs, which were the forerunners of his deliverance, showed themselves for several years towards the end of his life, which he believed and hoped was nearer its termination than it proved to be. But this remnant of existence, from which he sighed to be liberated, was held fast by the filial love of his disciples, and the ardent prayers of so many new Christian communities founded or ministered to by his zealous care. Two of his monks, one Irish and one Saxon, of the number of those whom he admitted to his cell to help him in his labour or to execute his instructions, saw him one day change countenance, and perceived in his face a sudden expression of the most contrary emotions: first a beatific joy, which made him raise to heaven a look full of the sweetest and tenderest gratitude; but a minute after this ray of supernatural joy gave place to an expression of heavy and profound sadness. The two spectators pressed him with questions which he refused to answer. At length they threw themselves at his knees and begged him, with tears, not to afflict them by hiding what had been revealed to him. "Dear children," he said to them, "I do not wish to afflict you. . . . Know, then, that it is thirty years to-day since I began my pilgrimage in Caledonia. I have long prayed God to let my exile end with this thirtieth year, and to recall me to the heavenly country. When you saw me so joyous, it was because I could already see the angels who came to seek my soul. But all at once they stopped short, down there upon that rock at the farthest limit of the sea which surrounds our island, as if they would approach to take me, and could not. And, in truth, they could not, because the Lord has paid less regard to my ardent prayer than to that of the many churches which have prayed for me, and which have obtained, against my will, that I should still dwell in this body for four years. This is the reason of my sadness. But in four years I shall die without being sick; in four years, I know it and see it, they will come back, these

holy angels, and I shall take my flight with them towards the Lord." [1]

At the end of the four years thus fixed he arranged everything for his departure. It was the end of May, and it was his desire to take leave of the monks who worked in the fields in the only fertile part of Iona, the western side. His great age prevented him from walking, and he was drawn in a car by oxen. When he reached the labourers he said to them, "I greatly desired to die a month ago, on Easter-day, and it was granted to me; but I preferred to wait a little longer, in order that the festival might not be changed into a day of sadness for you." And when all wept he did all he could to console them. Then turning towards the east, from the top of his rustic chariot he blessed the island and all its inhabitants—a blessing which, according to local tradition, was like that of St. Patrick in Ireland, and drove, from that day, all vipers and venomous creatures out of the island.[2]

On Saturday in the following week he went, leaning on his faithful attendant Diarmid, to bless the granary of the monastery. Seeing there two great heaps of corn, the fruit of the last harvest, he said, "I see with joy that my dear monastic family, if I must leave them this year, will not at least suffer from famine." "Dear father," said Diarmid,

[1] "Facies ejus subita, mirifica et lætifica hilaritate effloruit. . . . Incomparabili repletus gaudio, valde lætificabatur. Tum illa sapida et suavis lætificatio in mœstam convertitur tristificationem. . . . Duo . . . qui . . . ejus tugurioli ad januam stabant . . . illacrymati, ingemisculantes. . . . Quia vos, ait, amo, tristificari nolo. . . . Usque in hunc præsentem diem, meæ in Britannia peregrinationis terdeni completi sunt anni. . . . Sed ecce nunc, subito retardati, ultra nostræ fretum insulæ stant in rupe . . . cum sanctis mihi obviaturis illo tempore, ad Dominum lætus emigrabo."—ADAMNAN, iii. 22.

[2] "Ad visitandos fratres operarios senex senio fessus, plaustro vectus, pergit. . . . In occidua insulæ Ionæ laborantes parte . . . ut erat in vehiculo sedens, ad orientem suam convertens faciem, insulam cum insulanis benedixit habitatoribus . . . . Ex qua die, viperarum venena trisulcarum linguarum usque in hodiernam diem nullo modo aut homini aut pecori nocere potuere."—*Ibid.*, ii. 28, iii. 53.

"why do you thus sadden us by talking of your death?" "Ah, well," said the abbot, "here is a little secret which I will tell thee if thou wilt swear on thy knees to tell no one before I am gone. To-day is Saturday, the day which the Holy Scriptures call Sabbath or rest. And it will be truly my day of rest, for it shall be the last of my laborious life. This very night I shall enter into the path of my fathers. Thou weepest, dear Diarmid, but console thyself; it is my Lord Jesus Christ who deigns to invite me to rejoin Him; it is He who has revealed to me that my summons will come to-night."[1]

Then he left the storehouse to return to the monastery, but when he had gone half-way stopped to rest at a spot which is still marked by one of the ancient crosses of Iona.[2] At this moment an ancient and faithful servant, the old white horse which had been employed to carry milk from the dairy daily to the monastery, came towards him. He came and put his head upon his master's shoulder, as if to take leave of him. The eyes of the old horse had an expression so pathetic that they seemed to be bathed in tears. Diarmid would have sent the animal away, but the good old man forbade him. "The horse loves me," he said, "leave him with me; let him weep for my departure. The Creator has revealed to this poor animal what He has hidden from thee, a reasonable man." Upon which, still caressing the faithful brute, he gave him a last blessing.[3] When this was done he used the remnants of

[1] "Quod cum benedixisset et duos in eo frugum sequestratos acervos. . . . Valde congratulor meis familiaribus monachis, quia hoc etiam anno si a vobis emigrare me oportuerit, annum sufficientem habebitis. . . . Aliquem arcanum habeo sermusculum (*sic*). . . . Et mihi vere est sabbatum hæc hodierna dies . . . in qua post meas laborationum molestias sabbatizo. . . . Jam enim Dominus meus Jesus Christus me invitare dignatur."—ADAMNAN, iii. 23.

[2] The monument called *Maclean's Cross*.

[3] "Media via ubi postea crux molari lapide infixa, hodieque stans . . . in margine cernitur viæ. . . . Senio fessus, paululum sedens. . . . Ecce albus occurrit caballus, obediens servitor . . . caput in sinu ejus ponens . . . dominum a se suum mox emigraturum . . . cœpit plangere uberumque quasi homo fundere et valde spumeas flere lacrymas. . . . Sine hunc, sine

his strength to climb to the top of a hillock from which he could see all the isle and the monastery, and there lifted up his hands to pronounce a prophetic benediction on the sanctuary he had created. "This little spot, so small and low, shall be greatly honoured, not only by the Scots kings and people, but also by foreign chiefs and barbarous nations; and it shall be venerated even by the saints of other Churches."

After this he went down to the monastery, entered his cell, and began to work for the last time. He was then occupied in transcribing the Psalter. When he had come to the 33rd Psalm and the verse, *Inquirentes autem Dominum non deficient omni bono*, he stopped short. "I must stop here," he said. "Baithen will write the rest." Baithen, as has been seen, was the steward of Iona, and was to become its abbot. After this the aged saint was present at the vigil service before Sunday in the church. When he returned to his cell he seated himself upon the naked stones which served the septuagenarian for bed and pillow, and which were shown for nearly a century near his tomb.[1] Then he entrusted to his only companion a last message for the community: "Dear children, this is what I command with my last words—let peace and charity, a charity mutual and sincere, reign always among you! If you act thus, following the example of the saints, God who strengthens

nostri amatorem, ut in hunc meum sinum fletus effundat amarissimi plangoris. . . . Mœstum a se equum benedixit ministratorem."—ADAMNAN, iii. 23.

[1] "Monticellum monasterio supereminentem ascendens, in vertice ejus paululum stans, elevatis manibus, benedixit cœnobium: Huic loco, quamlibet angusto et vili, non tantum Scotorum reges cum populis, sed etiam barbararum et exterarum gentium regnatores cum plebibus suis. . . . Sedebat in tugurio Psalterium scribens. . . . Post talem perscriptum versum paginæ, ad vespertinalem dominicæ noctis missam" (note this singular expression for *vigiles*) "ingreditur ecclesiam. Qua consummata, ad hospitiolum revertens, in lectulo residet pernox, ubi pro stramine nudam habebat petram et pro pulvillo lapidem, qui hodie quasi quidam juxta sepulcrum ejus titulus stat monumenti."—*Ibid.* iii. 23.

the just will help you, and I, who shall be near Him, will intercede on your behalf, and you shall obtain of Him not only all the necessities of the present life in sufficient quantity, but still more the rewards of eternal life, reserved for those who keep His law."[1]

These were his last words. As soon as the midnight bell had rung for the matins of the Sunday festival, he arose and hastened before the other monks to the church, where he knelt down before the altar. Diarmid followed him, but as the church was not yet lighted he could only find him by groping and crying in a plaintive voice, "Where art thou, my father?" He found Columba lying before the altar, and, placing himself at his side, raised the old abbot's venerable head upon his knees. The whole community soon arrived with lights, and wept as one man at the sight of their dying father. Columba opened his eyes once more, and turned them to his children on either side with a look full of serene and radiant joy. Then with the aid of Diarmid he raised, as best he might, his right hand to bless them all; his hand dropped, the last sigh came from his lips; and his face remained calm and sweet like that of a man who in his sleep had seen a vision of heaven.[2]

[1] "Hæc vobis, o filioli, novissima commendo verba, ut inter vos mutuam et non fictam habeatis charitatem, cum pace."—ADAMNAN, iii. 23.

[2] "Post quæ conticuit. . . . Vix media nocte pulsata personante clocca, festinus surgens ad ecclesiam pergit, citiorque ceteris currens, solus introgressus juxta altare. Diormitius ecclesiam ingrediens flebili ingeminat voce: Ubi es, pater? Et necdum allatis fratrum lucernis, per tenebras palpans, sanctum ante altarium recubantem invenit: quem paululum erigens et juxta sedens sanctum in suo gremio posuit caput. Et inter hæc cœtus monachorum cum luminaribus accurrens, patre viso moriente, cœpit plangere. Et, ut *ab aliquibus qui præsentes inerant didicimus*, sanctus, necdum egrediente animo, apertis sursum oculis, ad utrumque latus cum mira vultus hilaritate et lætitia circumspiciebat; sanctos scilicet obvios intuens angelos. Diormitius tum sanctam sublevat ad benedicendum sancti monachorum chorum dexteram manum. Sed et ipse venerabilis pater in quantum poterat, simul suam movebat manum. Et post sanctam benedictionem taliter significatam, continuo spiritum exhalavit. Facies rubens, et mirum in modum angelica visione exhilarata, in tantum remansit, ut non quasi mortui, sed dormientis videretur

Such was the life and death of the first great apostle of Great Britain. We have lingered, perhaps, too long on the grand form of this monk, rising up before us from the midst of the Hebridean sea, who, for the third part of a century, spread over those sterile isles, and gloomy distant shores, a pure and fertilising light. In a confused age and unknown region he displayed all that is greatest and purest, and, it must be added, most easily forgotten in human genius: the gift of ruling souls by ruling himself.[1] To select the most marked and graphic incidents from the general tissue of his life, and those most fit to unfold that which attracts the modern reader—that is, his personal character and influence upon contemporary events—from a world of minute details having almost exclusive reference to matters supernatural or ascetical, has been no easy task. But when this is done, it becomes comparatively easy to represent to ourselves the tall old man, with his fine and regular features, his sweet and powerful voice, the Irish tonsure high on his shaven head, and his long locks falling behind, clothed with his monastic cowl, and seated at the prow of his coracle, steering through the misty archipelago and narrow lakes of the north of Scotland, and bearing from isle to isle, and from shore to shore, light, justice, and truth, the life of the conscience and of the soul.

One loves above all to study the depths of that soul, and the changes which had taken place in it since its youth. No more than his namesake of Luxeuil, the monastic apostle of Burgundy, was he of the Picts and Scots a *Columba*. Gentleness was of all qualities precisely the one in which he failed the most. At the beginning of his life the future abbot of Iona showed himself still more than the

viventis."—ADAMNAN, iii. 23. The narrative of Adamnan is an almost literal reproduction of that of Cummian, the first known biographer of the saint.

[1] "Animarum dux," said the angel who announced his birth to his mother. This expression is also found in Adamnan (i. 2), but placed in the mouth of Columba, and applied by him to another saint.

abbot of Luxeuil to be animated by all the vivacities of his age, associated with all the struggles and discords of his race and country. He was vindictive, passionate, bold, a man of strife, born a soldier rather than a monk, and known, praised, and blamed as a soldier—so that even in his lifetime he was invoked in fight;[1] and continued a soldier, *insulanus miles*,[2] even upon the island rock from which he rushed forth to preach, convert, enlighten, reconcile, and reprimand both princes and nations, men and women, laymen and clerks.

He was at the same time full of contradictions and contrasts—at once tender and irritable, rude and courteous, ironical and compassionate, caressing and imperious, grateful and revengeful—led by pity as well as by wrath, ever moved by generous passions, and among all passions fired to the very end of his life by two which his countrymen understand the best, the love of poetry and the love of country. Little inclined to melancholy when he had once surmounted the great sorrow of his life, which was his exile; little disposed even, save towards the end, to contemplation or solitude, but trained by prayer and austerities to triumphs of evangelical exposition; despising rest, untiring in mental and manual toil;[3] born for eloquence, and gifted with a voice so penetrating and sonorous that it was thought of afterwards as one of the most miraculous gifts that he had received of God;[4] frank and loyal, original and powerful in

[1] See *ante*, page 118, and note. [2] ADAMNAN, *Præfat.*

[3] "Nullum etiam unius horæ intervallum transire poterat, quo non orationi, aut lectioni, vel scriptioni, vel etiam alicui operationi, incumberet. Jejunationum et vigilarum indefessis laboribus, sine ulla intermissione, die noctuque ita occupatus, ut supra humanam possibilitatem pondus uniuscujusque videretur specialis operis. Et inter hæc omnibus carus, hilarem semper faciem ostendens, spiritus sancti gaudio intimis lætificabatur præcordiis."—*Ibid.*, *Præf.* ii.

[4] "Ab expertis quibusdam de voce beati psalmodiæ viri indubitanter traditum est. Quæ vox in ecclesia cum fratribus decantatis, aliquando per quingentos passus . . . aliquando per mille incomparabiliter elevata modo audiebatur. Mirum dictu! Nec in auribus eorum qui secum in ecclesia stabant vox ejus modum humanæ vocis in clamoris granditate

his words as in his actions—in cloister and mission and parliament, on land and on sea, in Ireland as in Scotland, always swayed by the love of God and of his neighbour, whom it was his will and pleasure to serve with an impassioned uprightness. Such was Columba. Besides the monk and missionary there was in him the makings of a sailor, soldier, poet, and orator. To us, looking back, he appears a personage as singular as he is lovable, in whom, through all the mists of the past and all the cross-lights of legend, the man may still be recognised under the saint—a man capable and worthy of the supreme honour of holiness, since he knew how to subdue his inclinations, his weakness, his instincts, and his passions, and to transform them into docile and invincible weapons for the salvation of souls and the glory of God.

excedebat. . . . Similiter enim in auribus prope et longe audientium personabat."—ADAMNAN, i. 37. In another passage he calls it "sermone nitidus."

CHAPTER VIII

SPIRITUAL DESCENDANTS OF ST. COLUMBA

His posthumous glory: miraculous visions on the night of his death: rapid extension of his worship.—Note upon his supposed journey to Rome, and residence there, in search of the relics of St. Martin.—His solitary funeral and tomb at Iona.—His translation to Ireland, where he rests between St. Patrick and St. Bridget.—He is, like Bridget, feared by the Anglo-Norman conquerors.—John de Courcy and Richard Strongbow.—The *Vengeance of Columba*.—Supremacy of Iona over the Celtic churches of Caledonia and the north of Ireland. —Singular privilege and primacy of the abbot of Iona in respect to bishops. — The ecclesiastical organisation of Celtic countries exclusively monastic.—Moderation and respect of Columba for the episcopal rank.—He left behind him no special rule.—That which he followed differed in no respect from the usual customs of the monastic order, which proves the exact observance of all the precepts of the Church and the chimerical nature of all speculations upon the primitive Protestantism of the Celtic Church.—But he founded an order, which lasted several centuries under the title of the "Family of Columb-Kill."—The clan and family spirit was the governing principle of Scottish monasticism.—Baithen and the eleven first successors of Columba at Iona were all members of the same race.— The two lines, lay and ecclesiastical, of the great founders.—The headquarters of the order transferred from Iona to Kells, one of Columba's foundations in Ireland. — The *Coarbs*. — Posthumous influence of Columba upon the Church of Ireland.—*Lex Columcille*.—Monastic Ireland in the seventh century the principal centre of Christian knowledge and piety.—Each monastery a school.—The transcription of manuscripts, which had been one of Columba's favourite occupations, continued and extended by his family even upon the Continent. —Historic Annals.—The *Festiloge* of Angus the Culdee.—Note upon the Culdees, and upon the foundation of St. Andrews in Scotland.— Propagation of Irish monasticism abroad.—Irish saints and monasteries in France, Germany, and Italy.— The Irish saint Cathal venerated in Calabria under the name of *San Cataldo*.—Monastic university of Lismore: crowd of foreign students, especially of

Anglo-Saxons, in Irish monasteries.—Confusion of temporal affairs in Ireland.—Civil wars and massacres.—Notes upon king-monks.—Patriotic intervention of the monks.—Adamnan, biographer and ninth successor of Columba, and his *Law of the Innocents*.—They are driven from their cloisters by the English.—Influence of Columba in Scotland.—Traces of the ancient Caledonian Church in the Hebrides.—Apostolical mission of Kentigern in the country between the Clyde and the Mersey.—His meeting with Columba.—His connection with the king and queen of Strath-Clyde.—Legend of the queen's ring.—Neither Columba nor Kentigern acted upon the Anglo-Saxons, who continued pagans, and maintained a threatening attitude.—The last bishops of conquered Britain desert their churches.

The influence of Columba, as of all men really superior to their fellows, and especially of the saints, far from ceasing with his life, went on increasing after his death. The supernatural character of his virtues, the miracles which were attributed to his intercession with God, had for a long time left scarcely any doubt as to his sanctity. It was universally acknowledged after his death, and has since remained uncontested among all the Celtic races. The visions and miracles which went to prove it would fill a volume. On the night, and at the very hour, of his death, a holy old man in a distant monastery in Ireland, one of those whom the Celtic chroniclers call the victorious soldiers of Christ,[1] saw with the eyes of his mind the isle of Iona, which he had never visited, flooded with miraculous light, and all the vault of heaven full of an innumerable army of shining angels, who went, singing celestial canticles, to bring away the holy soul of the great missionary. Upon the banks of a river,[2] in Columba's native land, another holy monk, while occupied with several others in fishing, saw, as also did his companions, the sky lighted up by a pillar

[1] "Sanctus senex, Christi miles . . . justus et sapiens . . . cuidam æque Christiano militi . . . suam enarravit visionem. . . . Christi victor miles."

[2] The Finn, which, after having marked the boundary between the two counties of Tyrone and Donegal, throws itself into the Foyle, which flows by Derry.

of fire, which rose from earth to the highest heaven, and disappeared only after lighting up the whole scene with a radiance as of the sun at noon.[1]

Thus began the long succession of wonders by which the worship of Columba's holy memory is characterised among the Celtic races. This worship, which seemed at one time concentrated in one of the smallest islets of the Atlantic, extended in less than a century after his death, not only throughout all Ireland and Great Britain, but into Gaul, Spain, and Italy, and even to Rome,[2] which some legends, insufficiently verified, describe him as having visited during the last years of his life, in order to renew the bonds of respectful affection and spiritual union which are supposed to have united him to the great pope St. Gregory, who

[1] "Hac præterita nocte media, . . . et in hora beati exitus ejus Ionam insulam, ad quam corpore nunquam perveni, totam angelorum claritudine in spiritu vidi irradiatam, totaque spatia aeris usque ad æthera cœlorum eorumdem angelorum claritate illustrata; qui ad sane ipsius animam preferendam, de cœlis missi descenderunt innumeri. Altisona carminalia et valde suavia audivi angelicorum cœtuum cantica eodem momento egressionis inter angelicos sanctæ ipsius animæ ascendentes choros. . . . Ego et alii mecum viri laborantes in captura piscium in valle piscosi fluminis Fendæ subito totum aerei illustratum cœli spatium vidimus . . . et ecce, quasi quædam pergrandis ignea apparuit columna, quæ in illa nocte media sursum ascendens ita nobis videbatur mundum illustrare totum sicuti æsteus et meridianus sol, et postquam illa penetravit columna cœlum, quasi post occasum solis tenebræ succedunt. Non tantum nos . . . sed et alii multi piscatores, qui sparsim per diversas fluminales piscinas ejusdem fluminis piscabantur, sicut nobis post retulerunt, simili apparitione visa, magno pavore sunt perculsi." Adamnan takes pains to prove that he received the account of those nocturnal visions, the first, from old monks at Iona, to whom it had been told by a hermit from Ireland; and the second, from the very monk who had directed the fishing on that memorable night.

[2] "Et hæc etiam eidem beatæ memoriæ viro a Deo non mediocris est collata gratia qua nomen ejus non tantum per totam nostram Scotiam et omnium totius orbis insularum maximam Britanniam, clare divulgari promeruit, in hac parva et extrema oceani Britannici commoratus (*sic*) insula; sed etiam ad trigonam usque Hispaniam, et Gallias, et ultra Alpes Penninas Italiam sitam pervenire, ipsam quoque Romanam civitatem, quæ caput est omnium civitatum."—ADAMNAN, *in finem.*

ascended the pontifical throne seven years before the death of the Hebridean apostle.[1]

It was expected that all the population of the neighbouring districts would hasten to Iona and fill the island during the funeral of the great abbot; and this had even been intimated to him before he died. But he had prophesied that the fact would be otherwise, and that his monastic family alone should perform the ceremonies of his burial. And it happened, accordingly, during the three days which were occupied with those rites, that a violent wind made it impossible for any boat to reach the island. Thus this friend and counsellor of princes and nations, this great traveller, this apostle of an entire nation which, during a thousand years, was to honour him as its patron saint, lay solitary upon his bier, in the little

[1] According to an account given by Colgan (p. 473), the famous hymn *Altus Prosator* was composed by Columba while the envoys of St. Gregory the Great were at Iona, and was sent by him to the pontiff, who listened to it standing up, in token of respect. We are obliged to acknowledge the same want of proof in the tradition which connects the holy abbot of Iona with the great wonder-worker of the Gauls, St. Martin, and which attributes to him a work similar to that of the great archbishop, who, in our own days, has undertaken to restore to an honourable condition the profaned grave of his greatest predecessor, by rebuilding the basilica which covers that glorious sepulchre. According to the narrative of O'Donnell (book iii. c. 27), Columba, on his return from Rome, went to Tours to seek the gospel which had lain for a century upon the breast of St. Martin, and carried it to Derry, where this relic was exhibited up to the twelfth century. The people of Tours had forgotten the situation of St. Martin's grave; and when they begged Columba to find it for them, he consented, only on condition of being allowed to keep for himself everything found in St. Martin's tomb, except his bones. The legend adds that Columba left one of his disciples there, the same Mochonna who had followed him first to Iona, and that he afterwards became Bishop of Tours. This alone is sufficient to disprove the narrative, since at the only period in the life of Columba at which this journey could have taken place, the Bishop of Tours was St. Gregory the historian, whose predecessor and successor are well known. Let us remark, at the same time, the curious traditional ties between the Church of Tours and that of Ireland, which lasted for several centuries. St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, is supposed to have been the grand-nephew of St. Martin, and to have been encouraged by him in his mission.

church of his island retirement; and his burial was witnessed only by his monks. But his grave, though it was not dug in presence of an enthusiastic crowd, as had been looked for, was not the less visited and surrounded by floods of successive generations, who for more than two hundred years crowded there to venerate the relics of the holy missionary, and to drink the pure waters of his doctrine and example at the fountainhead.

The remains of Columba rested here in peace up to the ninth century, until the moment when Iona, like all the British Isles, fell a prey to the ravages of the Danes. These cruel and insatiable pirates seem to have been attracted again and again by the wealth of the offerings that were lavished upon the tomb of the apostle of Caledonia. They burnt the monastery for the first time in 801; again in 805, when it contained only so small a number as sixty-four monks; and finally, a third time, in 877. To save from their rapacity a treasure which no pious liberality could replace, the body of St. Columba was carried to Ireland. And it is the unvarying tradition of Irish annals that it was deposited finally at Down, in an episcopal monastery not far from the western shore of the island, between the great monastery of Bangor on the north, from which came Columbanus of Luxeuil, and Dublin, the future capital of Ireland, to the south. There already lay the relics of Patrick and of Bridget; and thus was verified one of the prophecies in Irish verse attributed to Columba, in which he says—

> "They shall bury me first at Iona;
> But, by the will of the living God,
> It is at Dun that I shall rest in my grave,
> With Patrick and with Bridget the immaculate.
> Three bodies in one grave." [1]

[1] See REEVES, pp. lxxix. 313, 317, 462; compare COLGAN, p. 446. These three bodies were found at Down in 1185, after the disasters of the first English conquest, and again united in one tomb by the Bishop Malachi, and by John de Courcy, one of the great Anglo-Norman barons, conqueror (*coquestor*, according to the office) of Ulster. A special holiday was insti-

The three names have remained since that time inseparably united in the dauntless heart and fervent tenacious memory of the Irish people. It is to Columba that the oppressed and impoverished Irish seem to have appealed with the greatest confidence in the first English conquest in the twelfth century. The conquerors themselves feared him, not without reason, for they had learned to know his vengeance. John de Courcy, a warlike Anglo-Norman baron, he who was called the Conqueror (*Conquestor*) of Ulster, as William of Normandy of England, carried always with him the volume of Columba's prophecies;[1] and when the bodies of the three saints were found in his new possessions in 1180, he prayed the Holy See to celebrate their translation by the appointment of a solemn festival. Richard Strongbow, the famous Earl of Pembroke, who had been the first chief of the invasion, died of an ulcer in the foot which had been inflicted upon him, according to the Irish narrative, at the prayer of St. Bridget, St. Columba, and other saints, whose churches he had destroyed. He himself said, when at the point of death, that he saw the sweet and noble Bridget lift her arm to pierce him to the heart. Hugh de Lacy, another Anglo-Norman chief of great lineage, perished at Durrow, "by the vengeance of Columb-cille," says a chronicler, while he was engaged in building a castle to the injury of the abbey which Columba had founded, and loved so much.[2] A century after, this *vengeance* was still popularly dreaded; and some English pirates, who had pillaged his church in the island of Inchcolm, having sunk like lead in sight of land, their countrymen said that he should be called, not St. Columba, but St. *Quhalme*[3]—that is to say, the saint of Sudden Death.

tuted by the Holy See in memory of this translation. The office for this festival, printed first at Paris in 1620, has been given by Colgan at the beginning of his precious work, *Trias Thaumaturga*.

[1] KELLY, note to LYNCH, *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. i. p. 386.

[2] O'DONOVAN'S *Four Masters*, vol. i. pp. 25, 75.

[3] *Quhalme* in Anglo-Saxon meant sudden death, from whence the modern English word *qualm*.

A nation has special need to believe in these vengeances of God, always so tardy and infrequent, and which, in Ireland, above all, have scarcely sufficed to light with a fugitive gleam the long night of the conquest, with all its iniquities and crimes. Happy are the people among whom the everlasting justice of the appeal against falsehood and evil is placed under the shadow of God and the saints; and blessed also the saints who have left to posterity the memory of their indignation against all injustice.

As long as the body of Columba remained in his island grave, Iona, consecrated henceforward by the life and death of so great a Christian, continued to be the most venerated sanctuary of the Celts. For two centuries she was the nursery of bishops, the centre of education, the asylum of religious knowledge, the point of union among the British isles, the capital and necropolis of the Celtic race. Seventy kings or princes were buried there at the feet of Columba, faithful to a kind of traditional law, the recollection of which has been consecrated by Shakespeare.[1] During these two centuries, she retained an uncontested supremacy over all the monasteries and churches of Caledonia, as over those of half Ireland;[2] and we shall hereafter see how she disputed with the Roman missionaries the authority over the Anglo-Saxons of the north. Later still, if we are permitted to follow this narrative so far, at the end of the eleventh century, we shall see her ruins raised up and restored to monastic life by one of the most noble and touching heroines of Scotland and

[1] "Rosse. Where is Duncan's body?
Macduff. Carried to Colmes-Kill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones."
—Shakespeare, *Macbeth.*

[2] "Plurima exinde monasteria per discipulos ejus in Britannia et in Hibernia propagata sunt: in quibus omnibus idem monasterium insulanum, in quo ipse requiescit corpore, principatum tenet."—Bede, iii. 4. "Cujus monasterium in cunctis pene septentrionalium Scotorum et omnium Pictorum monasteriis non parvo tempore arcem tenebat regendisque eorum populis præerat."—*Ibid.*, iii. 3.

Christendom, the holy Queen Margaret, the gentle and noble exile, so beautiful, so wise, so magnanimous and beloved, who used her influence over Malcolm her husband only for the regeneration of the Church in his kingdom, and whose dear memory is worthy of being associated in the heart of the Scottish people with that of Columba, since she obtained by his intercession that grace of maternity which has made her the origin of the dynasty which still reigns over the British Isles.[1]

Let us here reconsider the privilege which gave to the abbots of Iona a sort of jurisdiction over the bishops of the neighbouring districts[2]—a privilege unique, and which would even appear fabulous, if it were not attested by two of the most trustworthy historians of the time, the Venerable Bede and Notker of St. Gall. In order to explain this strange anomaly it must be understood that in Celtic countries, especially in Ireland and in Scotland, ecclesiastical organisation rested, in the first place, solely upon conventual life. Dioceses and parishes were regularly constituted only in the twelfth century. Bishops, it is true, existed from

[1] ORDERIC VITAL, l. viii. 702; FORDUN, *Scotichronicon*, v. 37. On the summit of the picturesque rock upon which Edinburgh Castle is built, may still be seen the chapel dedicated to St. Margaret, recently restored by order of the Queen. She is the Christian Minerva of that Acropolis of the North.

[2] "Habet insula rectorem semper abbatem presbyterum, cujus jura omnis provincia, et ipsi etiam episcopi, ordine inusitato, debeant esse subjecti." —BEDE, l. iii. 4. Compare *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ad an. 565, ed. Giles. "In Scotia insula Hibernia depositio sancti Columbæ, cognomento apud suos Columb-Killi, eo quod multarum cellarum, id est monasteriorum vel ecclesiarum institutor, fundator et rector exstiterit: adeo ut abbas monasterii, cui novissime præfuit et ubi requiescit, contra morem ecclesiasticum primus omnium Hibernensium habeatur episcoporum."—NOTKER BALBULUS, *Martyrologium*. Mabillon quotes the charter of the Irish abbey of Honau in Germany, where the signature of the abbot precedes those of seven bishops, all bearing Celtic names.—*Annales Benedictini*, vol. ii. Appendix, p. 70. Who were the bishops subject to the primacy of Iona? If Colgan is to be believed—in *Præf.*, *Triad. Thaum.*, "prærogativo forte jurisdictioni legimus concessum, quod ejus abbas primatum et præcedentiam habeat ante omnes Scotorum episcopos"—it must be supposed that all the bishops of Ireland and Scotland were under its authority.

the beginning, but either without any clearly fixed territorial jurisdiction, or incorporated as a necessary but subordinate part of the ecclesiastical machinery with the great monastic bodies; and such was specially the case in Ireland. It is for this reason that the bishops of the Celtic Church, as has been often remarked, are so much overshadowed not only by great founders and superiors of monasteries, such as Columba, but even by simple abbots.[1] Nevertheless, it is evident that during the life of Columba, far from assuming any superiority whatever over the bishops who were his contemporaries, he showed them the utmost respect, even to such a point that he would not celebrate mass in the presence of a bishop who had come, humbly disguised as a simple convert, to visit the community of Iona.[2] At the same time the abbots scrupulously abstained from all usurpation of the rank, privileges, or functions reserved to bishops, to whom they had recourse for all the ordinations celebrated in the monasteries.[3] But as most of the bishops had been educated in monastic schools, they retained an affectionate veneration for their cradle, which, in regard to Iona especially, from which we shall see so many bishops issue, might have translated itself into a sort of prolonged submission to the conventual authority of their former superior. Five centuries later the bishops who came from the great French abbeys of Cluny and Citeaux took pleasure in professing the same filial subordination to their monastic birthplace.

The uncontested primacy of Iona over the bishops who had there professed religion, or who came there to be conse-

[1] See the curious incident narrated by Adamnan (i. 36), where a bishop hesitated to confer the priesthood on Aïdus the Black before having the authority of the abbot of Tiree, an insular *cella* dependant upon Iona.—"Episcopus non ausus est super caput ejus manum imponere, nisi prius presbyter Findchanus . . . suam capiti ejus pro confirmatione imponeret dextram."

[2] "Quidam proselytus ad sanctum venit qui se in quantum potuit occultabat humiliter, ut nullus sciret quod esset espiscopus."—ADAMNAN, i. 44.

[3] "Accito episcopo . . . apud supradictum Findchanum presbyter ordinatus est."—ADAMNAN, i. 36.

crated after their election, may be besides explained by the influence exercised by Columba over both clergy and people of the districts evangelised by him—an influence which was only increased by his death.

Did the great abbot of Iona, like his namesake of Luxeuil, leave to his disciples a monastic rule of his own, distinct from that of other Celtic monasteries? This has been often asserted, but without positive proof—and in any case no authentic text of such a document exists.[1] That which bears the name of the *Rule of Columb-kill*, and which has been sometimes attributed to him, has no reference in any way to the cenobites of Iona, and is only applicable to hermits or recluses, who lived perhaps under his authority, but isolated, and who were always very numerous in Ireland.[2]

A conscientious and attentive examination of all the monastic peculiarities which can be discovered in his biography[3] reveals absolutely nothing in respect to observances or obligations different from the rules borrowed by all the

[1] Colgan (*Trias Thaum.*, p. 471) and Hœften (*Disquisitiones Monasticæ*, l. i. tr. 8, p. 84) had in their hands the text of a rule attributed to Columba, and reprinted by Reeves in 1850, but both have acknowledged that it would be applicable only to anchorites.—O'CURRY, *Lectures*, pp. 374, 612. The only proof of the existence of a cenobitical rule originated by Columba, is the mention made of it by Bede in the address of Wilfrid at the celebrated conference of Whitby between the Benedictines and the Celtic monks, which will be discussed hereafter: "De Patre Vestro Columba et sequacibus ejus, quorum sanctitatem vos imitari et *Regulam* ac præcepta cœlestibus signis confirmata." The word *Regula*, however, which occurs so often in the lives of the Irish saints, can scarcely mean anything more than *observance, discipline;* each considerable saint had his own. Reeves has proved that the *Ordo monasticus*, attributed to Columba by the last edition of Holsteinus, does not go farther back than to the twelfth century.

[2] The recluses or anchorites, who passed their life in a little cell containing an altar, at which to say mass, sometimes solitary, sometimes attached to their church (like that of Marianus Scotus at Fulda), existed for a very long time in Ireland. Sir Henry Piers has proved the existence of one of these recluses, and described his cell in the county of Westmeath in 1682.—REEVES, *Memory of the Church of St. Duilech*, 1859.

[3] See the Appendix N to the volume of Reeves, entitled *Institutio Hyensis*. It is an excellent epitome of all the monastic customs of the period.

religious communities of the sixth century from the traditions of the Fathers of the Desert. Such an examination brings out distinctly, in the first place, the necessity for a vow [1] or solemn profession to prove the final admission of the monk into the community after a probation more or less prolonged; and, in the second place, the absolute conformity of the monastic life of Columba and his monks to the precepts and rites of the Catholic Church in all ages. Authorities unquestionable and unquestioned demonstrate the existence of auricular confession, the invocation of saints, the universal faith in their protection and intervention in temporal affairs, the celebration of the mass, the real presence in the Eucharist, ecclesiastical celibacy, fasts and abstinences, prayer for the dead, the sign of the cross, and, above all, the assiduous and profound study of the Holy Scriptures.[2] Thus the assumption made by certain writers of having found in the Celtic Church some sort of primitive Christianity not Catholic, crumbles to the dust; and the ridiculous but inveterate prejudice which accuses our fathers of having ignored or interdicted the study of the Bible is once again proved to be without foundation.

As to the customs peculiar to the Irish Church, and which were afterwards the cause of so many tedious struggles with the Roman and Anglo-Saxon missionaries, no trace of them is to be discovered in the acts or words of Columba. There is no mention of the tiresome disputes about the tonsure, or

[1] "Votum monachiale voverunt . . . votum monachicum devotus vovit." —ADAMNAN, i. 31, ii. 39.

[2] To prove our assertion we indicate several passages from Adamnan :—

Auricular Confession is expressly pointed out in the history of Libranus, ii. 39.

The Invocation of Saints at each page. Columba is even invoked during his life. Their protection and intervention in temporal affairs, ii. 5, 15, 39, 40.

The celebration of festivals and offices in their honour.

The real presence—All the elements of the Eucharist. "A sancto jussus Christi corpus conficere. . . . Eucharistiæ mysteria celebrare pro anima sancta."—COLGAN, *Vita Prima*, c. 8; ADAMNAN, iii. 12.

Solemn mass on Sunday, iii. 12; on other days, i. 40.

even of the irregular celebration of Easter, except perhaps in a prophecy vaguely made by him on the occasion of a visit to Clonmacnoise, upon the discords which this difference of opinion in respect to Easter would one day excite in the Scotic Church.[1]

If Columba made no rule calculated, like that of St. Benedict, to last for centuries, he nevertheless left to his disciples a spirit of life, of union, and of discipline, which was sufficient to maintain in one great body, for several centuries after his death, not only the monks of Iona, but the numerous communities which had gathered round them. This monastic body bore a noble name; it was long called the Order of the Fair Company,[2] and still longer the Family of Columb-kill. It was governed by abbots, who succeeded Columba as superiors of the community of Iona. These abbots proved themselves worthy of, and obtained from Bede, one of the most competent of judges, who began to write a hundred years after the death of Columba, a tribute of admiration without reserve, and even more striking than that which he gave to their founder:—"Whatever he may have been," said the Venerable Bede, with a certain shadow of Anglo-Saxon suspicion in respect to Celtic virtue and sanctity, "it is undeniable that he has left successors illustrious by the purity of their life, their great love of God, and their zeal for monastic order; and, although separated from us as to the observance of Easter, which is caused by their distance from all the rest of the world, ardently and closely devoted to the observance of those laws of piety and chastity which they have learned in the Old and New Testaments."[3] These praises are justified by the great number

[1] ADAMNAN, i. 3.

[2] "Cujus ordo dicebatur pulchræ societatis."—*Vita Sancti Kierani*, apud HŒFTEN, *op. cit.*, pp. 61, 64.

[3] "Qualiscunque fuerit ipse, nos hoc de illo certum tenemus, quia reliquit successores magna continentia et divino amore regulæque monasticæ insignes . . . pietatis et castitatis opera diligenter observantes."—BEDE, iii. 4.

of saints who have issued from the spiritual lineage of Columba;[1] but they should be specially applied to his successors in the abbatial see of Iona, and, in the first place, to his first successor, whom he had himself pointed out, the holy and amiable Baithen, who was so worthy to be his lieutenant and friend, and could so well replace him. He survived Columba only three years, and died on the anniversary of his master's death.[2] The cruel sufferings of his last illness did not prevent him from praying, writing, and teaching to his last hour. Baithen was, as has been said, the cousin-german of Columba, and almost all the abbots of Iona who succeeded him were of the same race.

The family spirit, or, to speak more truly, the clan spirit, always so powerful and active in Ireland, and which was so striking a feature in the character of Columba, had become a predominating influence in the monastic life of the Celtic Church. It was not precisely hereditary succession, since marriage was absolutely unknown among the regular clergy; but great influence was given to blood in the election of abbots, as in that of princes or military leaders. The nephew or cousin of the founder or superior of a monastery seemed the candidate pointed out by nature for the vacant dignity. Special reasons were necessary for breaking through this rule. Thus it is apparent that the eleven first abbots of Iona after Columba, proceeded, with the exception of one individual, from the same stock as himself, from the race of

[1] The number may be seen in Colgan, who names as many as a hundred and twelve, the most part of whom are commemorated in the Irish martyrologies.

[2] During his short abbacy, it is apparent that all was not unanimous adhesion and enthusiasm. A certain Bevan, described as a persecutor of the Churches, once sent to ask the remains of the meal which the monks of Iona had just eaten, in order to turn them into derision. "Nec ob aliud hoc postulabat, nisi ut causam blasphemiæ ac despectionis fratrum inveniret." Baithen sent to him what remained of the milk which had made the repast of the brethren. After he had drunk it, the scoffer was seized with such suffering, that he was converted, and died confessing his repentance.—ACT. SS. BOLLAND. vol. ii. June, p. 238.

Tyrconnel, and were all descended from the same son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, the famous king of all Ireland.[1] Every great monastery became thus the centre and appanage of a family, or, to speak more exactly, of a clan, and was alike the school and the asylum of all the founder's kindred. At a later period a kind of succession, purely laic and hereditary, developed itself by the side of the spiritual posterity, and was invested with the possession of most of the monastic domains. These two lines of descendants, simultaneous but distinct, from the principal monastic founders, are distinguished in the historical genealogies of Ireland under the names of *ecclesiastica progenies* and of *plebilis progenies*.[2] After the ninth century, in consequence of the relaxation of discipline, the invasion of married clerks, and the increasing value of land, the line of spiritual descent confounded itself more and more with that of natural inheritance, and there arose a crowd of abbots purely lay and hereditary, as proud of being the collateral descendants of a holy founder, as they were happy to possess the vast domains with which the foundation had been gradually enriched. This fatal abuse made its appearance also in France and Germany, but was less inveterate than in Ireland, where it still existed in the time of St. Bernard; and in Scotland, where it lasted even after the Reformation.

It was never thus at Iona, where the abbatical succession was always perfectly regular and uninterrupted up to the invasions and devastations of the Danes at the commencement of the ninth century. From the time of those invasions the abbots of Iona began to occupy an inferior position. The radiant centre from which Christian civilisation had shone upon the British Isles grew dim.[3] The headquarters of the

[1] See the genealogical table given by Dr. Reeves, at page 313 of his edition of Adamnan.

[2] Dr. Reeves has thoroughly examined this curious question in a special paper, *On the Ancient Abbatial Succession in Ireland*, ap. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, vol. vii., 1857.

[3] Magnus, king of Norway, after having conquered the Hebrides, visited

communities united under the title of the *Family* or *Order of Columb-kill*, were transferred from Iona to one of the other foundations of the saint at Kells, in the centre of Ireland, where a successor of Columba, superior-general of the order, titulary abbot of Iona, Armagh, or some other great Irish monastery, and bearing the distinctive title of *Coarb*, resided for three centuries more.[1]

We have lingered too long over the great and touching figure of the saint whose life we have just recorded. And it now remains to us to throw a rapid glance at the influence which he exercised on all around him, and even upon posterity.

This influence is especially evident in the Irish Church, which seems to have been entirely swayed by his spirit, his successors, and his disciples, during the time which is looked upon as the Golden Age in its history, and which extends up to the period of the Danish invasions, at the end of the eighth century. During all this time the Irish Church, which continued, as from its origin, entirely monastic, seems to have been governed by the recollections or institutions of Columba. The words *Lex Columbeille* are found on many pages of its confused annals, and indicate sometimes the mass of traditions preserved by its monasteries, sometimes the tributes which the kings levied for the defence of the Church and country, while carrying through all Ireland the

Iona in 1097, and annexed the islands to the bishopric of Sodor and Man (*Sodorensis*), under the metropolitan of Drontheim, which destroyed the ancient ecclesiastical tradition in the island. In 1203, an abbot of Iona, who came from Ireland, and belonged to the family of Columba, is mentioned for the last time. In 1214, there is mention of a priory of the order of Cluny, the origin of which is unknown.—LANIGAN, vol. iv. p. 347; COSMO INNES, p. 110. The temporal sovereignty fell to the famous *Lord of the Isles*, immortalised by Walter Scott, and whose tombs may still be seen there.—See Appendix A.

[1] See the detailed chronology of the forty-nine successors of Columba, and of their arts and laws, from 597 to 1219, in the *Chronicon Hyense* of Reeves, from page 359. These Coarbs have been strangely confounded by Ussher, Ware, Lanigan, and other writers, with the *chorepiscopi* of the Continent.

shrine which contained his relics.[1] The continued influence of the great abbot of Iona was so marked, even in temporal affairs, that more than two centuries after his death, in 817, the monks of his order, *Congregatio Columbcille*, went solemnly to Tara, the ancient capital of Druidical Ireland, to excommunicate there the supreme monarch of the island, who had assassinated a prince of the family of their holy chief.[2]

It has been said, and cannot be sufficiently repeated, that Ireland was then regarded by all Christian Europe as the principal centre of knowledge and piety. In the shelter of its numberless monasteries a crowd of missionaries, doctors, and preachers were educated for the service of the Church and the propagation of the faith in all Christian countries. A vast and continual development of literary and religious effort[3] is there apparent, superior to anything that could be seen in any other country of Europe. Certain arts—those of architecture, carving, metallurgy, as applied to the decoration of churches—were successfully cultivated, without speaking of music, which continued to flourish both among the learned and among the people. The classic languages—not only Latin, but Greek—were cultivated, spoken, and written with a sort of passionate pedantry, which shows at least how powerful was the sway of intellectual influences over these ardent souls. Their mania for Greek was even carried so far that they wrote the Latin of the church books in Hellenic characters.[4] And in Ireland, more than anywhere else, each monastery was a school, and each school a workshop of transcription, from which day by day issued new copies of the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers of the

[1] This occurred in 753, 757, and 778. [2] *Annals of Ulster*, ann. 817.

[3] "Scripturarum tam liberalium quam ecclesiasticarum."

[4] REEVES'S *Adamnan*, pp. 158, 354. In a MS. life of St. Brendan this curious passage occurs: "Habebat . . . missalem librum scriptum Græcis litteris. . . . Et positus est ille liber super altare. . . . Illico jam litteras Græcas scivit sanctus Brendanus, sicuti Latinas quas didicit ab infantia. Et cœpit missam cantare."

primitive Church—copies which were dispersed through all Europe, and which are still to be found in Continental libraries. They may easily be recognised by the original and elegant character of their Irish writing, as also by the use of the alphabet common to all the Celtic races, and afterwards employed by the Anglo-Saxons, but to which in our day the Irish alone have remained faithful. Columba, as has been seen, had given an example of this unwearied labour to the monastic scribes : his example was continually followed in the Irish cloisters, where the monks did not entirely limit themselves to the transcription of Holy Scripture, but reproduced also Greek and Latin authors, sometimes in Celtic character, with gloss and commentary in Irish, like that Horace which modern learning has discovered in the library of Berne.[1] These marvellous manuscripts, illuminated with incomparable ability and patience by the monastic family of Columba, excited, five hundred years later, the declamatory enthusiasm of a great enemy of Ireland, the Anglo-Norman historian, Gerald de Barry; and they still attract the attention of archæologists and philologists of the highest fame.[2]

Exact annals of the events of the time were also made out in all the monasteries. These annals replaced the chronicles of the bards; and so far as they have been preserved and already published, or are yet to be so, they

[1] Orelli, in his edition of Horace, says that this Codex of Berne, with its Irish gloss, is of the eighth or ninth century : "*Scotice scriptus*, antiquissimus omnium quotquot adhuc innotuerunt."

[2] "Hæc equidem quanto frequentius et diligentius intueor, semper quasi novis obstupeo, semperque magis et magis admiranda conspicio."—GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS, *Topogr. Hiber.*, ii. c. 38. Most of these admired and quoted MSS. in Continental or Anglo-Saxon libraries are of Irish origin, as has been proved by Zeuss, Keller, and Reeves. The MSS. used by the celebrated philologist Zeuss in the composition of his *Grammatica Celtica* (Lipsiæ, 1853) contain Irish glosses upon the Latin text of Priscian, at St. Gall, on St. Paul's epistles, at Wurzburg, on the commentary of St. Columbanus upon the Psalms, which has been brought from Bobbio to Milan, and on Bede, brought from Reichenau to Carlsruhe.

now form the principal source of Irish history.[1] Ecclesiastical records have naturally a greater place in them than civil history. They celebrate especially the memory of the saints, who have always been so numerous in the Irish Church, where each of the great communities can count a circle of holy men, issued from its bosom or attached to its confraternity. Under the name of *sanctilogy* or *festilogy* (for martyrs were too little known in Ireland to justify the usual term of martyrology), this circle of biographies was the spiritual reading of the monks, and the familiar instruction of the surrounding people. Several of these *festilogies* are in verse, one of which, the most famous of all, is attributed to Angus, called the *Culdee*, a simple brother, miller of the monastery of Tallach.[2] In this the principal saints of other countries find a place along with three hundred and sixty-five Irish saints, one for each day of the year, who are all celebrated with that pious and patriotic enthusiasm, at once poetical and moral, which burns so naturally in every Irish heart.

The name of Culdee leads us to point out in passing the absurd and widespread error which has made the Culdees be looked upon as a kind of monkish order, married and indigenous to the soil, which existed before the introduction of Christianity into Ireland and Scotland by the Roman missionaries, and of whom the great abbot of Iona was the founder or chief. This opinion, propagated by learned Anglicans, and blindly copied by various French writers, is now universally acknowledged as false by sincere and competent judges.[3] The Culdees, a sort of third order, attached

[1] These precious collections were continued by the more recent Orders after the English conquest, and even after the Reformation, up to the seventeenth century. See especially the valuable collection entitled *Annals of the Four Masters*, that is to say, of the four Franciscans of Donegal, which come down to 1634.

[2] See the analysis made of it by O'Curry, *Lectures*, &c., pp. 364, 371, and, after him, M. de la Villemarqué, in his *Poésie des Cloîtres Celtiques*.

[3] According to Dr. Reeves, the name of *Culdee* or *Cēile Dei*, answering to

to the regular monasteries, appeared in Ireland, as elsewhere, only in the ninth century, and had never anything more than a trifling connection with the Columban communities.[1]

Still more striking than the intellectual development of which the Irish monasteries were at this period the centre, is the prodigious activity displayed by the Irish monks in extending and multiplying themselves over all the countries of Europe—here to create new schools and sanctuaries among nations already evangelised—there to carry the light of the Gospel, at peril of their lives, to the countries that were still pagan. We should run the risk of forestalling our future task if we did not resist the temptations of the subject, which would lead us to go faster than time, and to follow those armies of brave and untiring Celts, always adventurous and

the Latin term *Servus Dei*, appeared for the first time in authentic history with the name of this Angus, who lived in 780. It was afterwards applied to the general body of monks, that is to say, to all the clerks living under a monastic rule in Ireland and Scotland. According to the lamented O'Curry, the Culdees were nothing more than ecclesiastics or laymen, attached to the monasteries, and whose first founder was a St. Malruain, who died in 787 or 792. This information, which the author has derived from the two princes of Irish erudition, agrees perfectly with the conclusions of Dr. Lanigan, in his very learned and impartial ecclesiastical history of Ireland, vol. iv. pp. 295–300; as also with those of the new Bollandists, vol. viii. of October, p. 86, *Disquisitio in Culdeos*, ap. Acta S. Reguli. According to the worthy continuators of the *Acta Sanctorum*, the Culdees were not monks, but secular brothers, or rather canons, and appeared at soonest in the year 800. At the same time our learned contemporaries remit to the ninth century that translation of the relics of the apostle St. Andrew, who became the patron saint of Scotland in the middle ages, which the legends have attributed to the fourth or sixth. This translation, made by a bishop named Regulus (Rule), occasioned the foundation of the episcopal see and town of St. Andrews on the east coast of Scotland, in the county of Fife, which was made metropolis of the kingdom in 1472, and possesses a university which dates from 1411. Very fine ruins of the churches destroyed by the Reformers in 1559 are still to be seen there. Since the preceding note was written, a new publication, by Dr. Reeves, *The Culdees of the British Islands as they appear in History, with an Appendix of Evidences* (Dublin, 1864), has summed up and ended all controversy upon this long-disputed question, and given the last blow to the chimeras of sectarian erudition.

[1] REEVES'S *Adamnan*, p. 368.

often heroic, into the regions where we shall perhaps one day find them again. Let us content ourselves with a simple list, which has a certain eloquence even in the dryness of its figures. Here is the number, probably very incomplete, given by an ancient writer, of the monasteries founded out of Ireland by Irish monks, led far from their country by the love of souls, and, no doubt, a little also by that love of travel which has always been one of their special distinctions :—

Thirteen in Scotland,
Twelve in England,
Seven in France,
Twelve in Armorica,
Seven in Lorraine,
Ten in Alsatia,
Sixteen in Bavaria,
Fifteen in Rhetia, Helvetia, and Allemania ;

without counting many in Thuringia and upon the left bank of the Lower Rhine ; and, finally, six in Italy.

And that it may be fully apparent how great was the zeal and virtue of which those monastic colonies were at once the product and the centre, let us place by its side an analogous list of saints of Irish origin, whom the gratitude of nations converted, edified, and civilised by them, have placed upon their altars as patrons and founders of those churches whose foundations they watered with their blood :—

A hundred and fifty (of whom thirty-six were martyrs) in Germany,
Forty-five (of whom six were martyrs) in Gaul,
Thirty in Belgium,
Thirteen in Italy,
Eight, all martyrs, in Norway and Iceland.[1]

In the after part of this narrative we shall meet many of the most illustrious, especially in Germany. Let us confine ourselves here to pointing out, among the thirteen Irish

[1] STEPHEN WHITE, *Apologia*, in HAVERTY'S *History of Ireland.*

saints honoured with public veneration in Italy, him who is still invoked at the extremity of the peninsula as the patron of Tarento under the name of San Cataldo.

His name in Ireland was Cathal, and before he left his country to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and to become a bishop at Tarento, he had presided over the great monastic school of Lismore,[1] in the south of Ireland.[2] Thanks to his zeal and knowledge, this school had become a sort of university, to which he attracted an immense crowd of students, not only Irish, but foreigners, from Wales, England, France, and even from Germany. When their education was concluded, a portion of them remained to increase the already numerous communities in the holy and lettered city of Lismore; the others carried back with them to their different countries a recollection of the advantages which they owed to Ireland and her monks.[3] For it is important to prove that, while Ireland sent forth her sons into all the regions of the then known world, numberless strangers hastened there to seat themselves at the feet of her doctors, and to find in that vast centre of faith and knowledge all the remnants of ancient civilisation which her insular position

[1] See his acts, in COLGAN, pp. 542–562, and the BOLLANDISTS, vol. ii. May, pp. 569–578. Lanigan (vol. iii. pp. 121–128) quotes a life of this saint in Latin verse by Bonaventura Moroni. His father, St. Donatus, is supposed to have been Bishop of Lecce, in the same province as Tarento.

[2] See the legend of the founder of Lismore, Book VIII. chap. iii.

[3] "Egregia jam et sancta civitas est Lismor, cujus dimidium est asylum, in quo nulla mulier audet intrare, sed plenum est cellis et monasteriis sanctis: et multitudo virorum sanctorum semper illi manet. Viri enim religiosi ex omni parte Hiberniæ, et non solum ex Anglia et Britannia confluunt ad eam, volentes ibi migrare ad Christum."—*Act. Sanct. Bolland.*, vol. iii. May, p. 388. "Ad eam brevi excellentiam pervenit, ut ad ipsum audiendum Galli, Angli, Scoti, Teutones aliique finitarum regionum quam plurimi Lesmorium conveniunt."—*Officium S. Cataldi*, ap. LANIGAN, *loco cit.* This monastic town of Lismore, the seat of a bishopric since united with that of Waterford, must not be identified with another bishopric called Lismore, situated in an island of the Hebridean archipelago. The Irish Lismore is now specially remarkable for a fine castle of the Duke of Devonshire on the picturesque banks of the Blackwater.

had permitted her to save from the flood of barbarous invasions.

The monasteries which gradually covered the soil of Ireland were thus the hostelries of a foreign emigration. Unlike the ancient Druidical colleges, they were open to all. The poor and the rich, the slave as well as the freeman, the child and the old man, had free access and paid nothing. It was not, then, only to the natives of Ireland that the Irish monasteries, occupied and ruled by the sons of Columba, confined the benefits of knowledge and of literary and religious education. They opened their door with admirable generosity to strangers from every country and of every condition; above all, to those who came from the neighbouring island, England, some to end their lives in an Irish cloister, some to search from house to house for books, and masters capable of explaining those books. The Irish monks received with kindness guests so greedy of instruction, and gave them both books and masters, the food of the body and the food of the soul, without demanding any recompense.[1] The Anglo-Saxons, who were afterwards to repay this teaching with ingratitude so cruel, were of all nations the one which derived most profit from it. From the seventh to the eleventh century English students flocked into Ireland, and for four hundred years the monastic schools of the island maintained the great reputation which brought so many successive generations to dip deeply there into the living waters of knowledge and of faith.

This devotion to knowledge and generous munificence towards strangers, this studious and intellectual life, nourished

[1] "Erant ibidem multi nobilium simul et mediocrium de gente Anglorum qui . . . relicta patria, vel divinæ lectionis, vel continentioris vitæ gratia illo secesserant. Et quidam mox se monasticæ conversationi fideliter mancipaverunt, alii magis circumeundo per cellas magistrorum lectioni operam dare gaudebant, quod omnes Scoti libentissime suscipientes victum eis quotidianum sine pretio, aliis quoque ad legendum et magisterium gratuitum præbere curabant."—BEDE, iii. 27, ad ann. 664. There still existed in Armagh, in 1092, a locality called *Trien-Saxon*, inhabited by Anglo-Saxon students.—COLGAN, *Trias Thaum.*, p. 300; compare LANIGAN, iii. 490, 493.

into being by the sheltering warmth of faith, shone with all the more brightness amid the horrible confusion and bloody disasters which signalise, in so far as concerned temporal affairs, the *Golden Age* of ecclesiastical history in Ireland, even before the sanguinary invasions of the Danes at the end of the eighth century. It has been said with justice that war and religion have been in all ages the two great passions of Ireland. But it must be allowed that war seems almost always to have carried the day over religion, and that religion did not prevent war from degenerating too often into massacres and assassinations. It is true that after the eighth century there are fewer kings murdered by their successors than in the period between St. Patrick and St. Columba; it is true that three or four of these kings lived long enough to have the time to go and expiate their sins as monks at Armagh or Iona.[1] But it is not less true that the annals of the monastic family of Columba present to us at each line with mournful laconism a spectacle which absolutely contradicts the flattering pictures which have been drawn of the peace which Ireland should have enjoyed. Almost every year, such words as the following are repeated with cruel brevity:—

Bellum.
Bellum lacrymabile.
Bellum magnum.
Vastatio.
Spoliatio.
Violatio.
Obsessio.
Strages Magna.
Jugulatio.

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[1] These kings are, according to the Annals of Tigherneach—

Comgall, who died a monk at Lotra (?—perhaps Lure) in 710.
Feailhbeartach, who abdicated in 729, and was a monk for thirty years at Armagh.
Domhnall, or Donald III., who died at Iona in 764.
Niall Fiosach, who died at Iona in 777, after having been a monk for seven years.

The principal kings or monarchs of the island are alone mentioned

And above all, *Jugulatio*. It is the word which returns oftenest, and in which seems to be summed up the destiny of those unhappy princes and people.

Such an enumeration should give rise to the reflection, what this wild tree of Celtic nature would have been without the monastic graft. We can thus perceive with what ferocious natures Columba and his disciples had to do. If, notwithstanding the preaching of the monks, a state of affairs so barbarous continued to exist, what might it have been had the Gospel never been preached to those savages, and if the monks had not been in the midst of them like a permanent incarnation of the Spirit of God?

The monks were at the same time neither less inactive nor more spared than the women, who fought and perished in the wars precisely like the men, up to the time when the most illustrious of Columba's successors delivered them from that terrible bondage. A single incident drawn from the sanguinary chaos of the period will suffice at once to paint the always atrocious habits of those Celtic Christians, and the always beneficent influence of monastic authority. A hundred years after the death of Columba, his biographer and ninth successor, Adamnan, was crossing a plain, carrying his old mother on his back, when they saw two bands fighting, and in the midst of the battle a woman dragging another woman after her, whose breast she had pierced with an iron hook. At this horrible spectacle the abbot's mother seated herself on the ground, and said to him, "I will not leave this spot till thou hast promised me to have women exempted for ever from this horror, and from every battle and expedition." He gave her his word, and he kept it. At the next national assembly of Tara, he proposed and carried a law which is inscribed in the annals of Ireland as the *Law of Adamnan*, or *Law of the Innocents*, and which for ever freed

here. As for the provincial kings, or chieftains of clans, who took the monastic habit, it would be impossible to count them. Many are named in the *Cambrensis Eversus* of Lynch, c. 30.

the Irish women from the obligation of military service and all its homicidal consequences.[1]

At the same time, nothing was more common in Ireland than the armed intervention of the monks in civil wars, or in the struggles between different communities. We may be permitted to believe that the spiritual descendants of Columba reckoned among them more than one monk of character as warlike as their great ancestor, and that there were as many monastic actors as victims in these desperate conflicts. Two centuries after Columba, two hundred monks of his abbey at Durrow perished in a battle with the neighbouring monks of Clonmacnoise; and the old annalists of Ireland speak of a battle which took place in 816, at which eight hundred monks of Ferns were killed. The Irish religious had not given up either the warlike humour or the dauntless courage of their race.

Nor is it less certain that the studious fervour and persevering patriotism which were such marked features in the character of Columba remained the inalienable inheritance of his monastic posterity—an inheritance which continued up to the middle ages, to the time of that famous statute of Kilkenny, which is an ineffaceable monument of the ferocious arrogance of the English conquerors, even before the Reformation. This statute, after having denounced every marriage between the two races as an act of high treason, went so far as to exclude all native Irish from the monasteries—from those same monasteries which Irishmen alone had founded and occupied for eight centuries, and where, before and after Columba, they had afforded a generous hospitality to the British fugitives and to the victorious Saxons.

But we must not permit ourselves to linger on the Irish

[1] "Lex Adamnani. . . . Adamnanus ad Hiberniam pergit et . . . dedit legem innocentium populis."—*Annales Ultoniæ*, an. 696. Compare PETRIE'S *Tara*, p. 147. REEVES, pp. 51, 53, 179. The assembly was composed of forty ecclesiastics and thirty-nine laymen. They also decreed an annual tribute to be collected over all Ireland for the benefit of the abbot of Iona and his successors.

coasts. We shall soon again meet her generous and intrepid sons, always the first in the field, and the most ready to expose themselves to danger, among the apostles and propagators of monastic institutions, upon the banks of the Scheldt, the Rhine, and the Danube, where also they were eclipsed and surpassed by the Anglo-Saxons, but where their names, forgotten in Ireland, still shine with a pure and beneficent light.

The influence of Columba, so universal, undeniable, and enduring in his native island, should not have been less so in his adopted country—in that Caledonia which became more and more an Irish or Scotic colony, and thus merited the name of Scotland, which it retained. Notwithstanding, his work has perhaps left fewer authentic traces there. All unite in attributing to him the conversion of the Northern Picts, and the introduction or re-establishment of the faith among the Picts of the South and the Scots of the West. It is also pretty generally agreed to date from his times —even though there is no evidence of their direct subordination to Iona—the great monasteries of Old Melrose,[1] of Abercorn, Tynninghame, and Coldingham, situated between the Forth and the Tweed, and which afterwards became the centres of Christian extension among the Saxons of Northumbria. Further north, but still upon the east coast, the round towers which are still to be seen at Brechin and Abernethy bear witness to their Irish origin, and consequently to the influence of Columba, who was the first and principal Irish missionary in these districts. The same may be said of those primitive and lowly constructions, built with long and large stones laid upon each other, without cement, which are to be found at St. Kilda and other Hebridean isles, and also upon certain points of the neighbouring shore, resembling exactly in form the deserted monasteries which

[1] Old Melrose, which was the cradle of the great and celebrated Cistercian abbey of Melrose, whose ruins are admired by all travellers and readers of Walter Scott. The site alone now remains.

are so numerous in the isles of western Ireland.[1] Another relic of the primitive Church is found in the caves, hollowed out or enlarged by the hand of a man, in the cliffs or mountains of the interior, inhabited of old, as were the grots of Subiaco and Marmoutier, and as the caves of Meteores in Albania[2] are still, by hermits, or sometimes even by bishops (as St. Woloc, St. Regulus[3]). Kentigern, the apostle of Strathclyde, appears to us in the legend at the mouth of his episcopal cave, which was hollowed out in the side of a cliff, and where the people looked at him from afar with respectful curiosity, while he studied the direction of the storms at sea, and breathed in with pleasure the first breezes of the spring.

This bishop, Welsh by birth, has already been mentioned in connection with the principality of Wales, where, as we have already seen, he founded an immense monastery during an exile, the cause of which it is impossible to ascertain, but which was the occasion of a relapse into idolatry among his diocesans.[4] The district of Strathclyde or Cumbria, on the west coasts of Britain, from the mouth of the Clyde to that of the Mersey—that is to say, from Glasgow to Liverpool—was occupied by a mingled race of Britons and Scots, whose capital was Al-Cluid, now Dumbarton. A prince called Roderick (Rydderch Haël), whose mother was Irish, and who had been baptized by an Irish monk, hastened, when the authority fell into his hands, to recall Kentigern, who returned, bringing with him a hive of Welsh monks, and established definitively the seat of his apostleship at Glasgow, where Ninian had preceded him nearly a century before without leaving any lasting traces of his passage.

[1] Studied carefully by Lord Dunraven and other members of the learned company called the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society.

[2] Curzon's *Monasteries of the Levant.*

[3] See above, the note of the Bollandists upon the apostolic labours of St. Regulus. An *auge* or lavatory in stone is still shown near the ruined church of Strath Deveron, which is called St. Woloc's bath, and where mothers come to bathe their sick children. This holy bishop lived in a house built like the first church of Iona. "Pauperculam casam calamis viminibusque contextam."—*Breviarium Aberdonense*, Propr. SS., p. 14.

[4] *Acta SS. Bolland.*, vol. i. January, p. 819.

Kentigern, more fortunate, established upon the site of a burying-ground consecrated by Ninian the first foundation of the magnificent cathedral which still bears his name.[1]

It was consecrated by an Irish bishop, brought from Ireland for the purpose, and who celebrated that ceremony without the assistance of other bishops, according to Celtic customs. Kentigern collected round him numerous disciples, all learned in holy literature, all working with their hands, and possessing nothing as individuals—a true monastic community.[2] He distinguished himself during all his episcopate by his efforts to bring back to the faith the Picts of Galloway, which formed part of the kingdom of Strathclyde; and afterwards by numerous missions and monastic foundations throughout all Albyn—a name which was then given to midland Scotland. His disciples penetrated even to the Orkney Isles, where they must have met with the missionaries of Iona.[3]

The salutary and laborious activity of Kentigern must often have encroached upon the regions which were specially within the sphere of Columba. But the generous heart of Columba was inaccessible to jealousy. He was besides the personal friend of Kentigern and of King Roderick.[4] The fame of the Bishop of Strathclyde's apostolic labours drew him from his isle to do homage to his rival. He arrived from Iona with a great train of monks, whom he arranged in three companies at the moment of their entrance into

[1] St. Mungo's. This is the name borne by Kentigern in Scotland, and means *dearest*. Kentigern seems to be derived from *Ken*, which means head, and *Tiern*, lord, in Welsh (BOLLAND., p. 820). The existing Cathedral of Glasgow was begun in 1124 by Bishop Jocelyn, a monk of Melrose, who at the same time caused a life of his predecessor Kentigern, derived from ancient authorities, to be written by another Jocelyn, a monk of Furness.

[2] "Accito autem de Hibernia uno episcopo, more Britonum et Scotorum, in episcopum ipsum consecrari fecerunt. . . . In singulis casulis, sicut ipse sanctus Kentigernus, commorabantur. Unde et singulares clerici a vulgo *Culdei* nuncupabantur."—JOCELYN, *Vita S. Kentig.* This last passage quoted by Reeves, *The Culdees of the British Isles*, p. 27, is not in the text given by the Bollandists.

[3] See *ante*, page 100.

[4] ADAMNAN, i. 15.

Glasgow. Kentigern distributed in the same way the numerous monks who surrounded him in his episcopal monastery, and whom he led out to meet the abbot of Iona. He divided them, according to their age, into three bands, the youngest of whom marched first; then those who had reached the age of manhood; and, last of all, the old and grey-haired, among whom he himself took his place. They all chanted the anthem *In viis Domini magna est gloria Domini, et via justorum facta est: et iter sanctorum præparatum est.* The monks of Iona, on their side, chanted in choir the versicle, *Ibunt sancti de virtute in virtutem: videbitur Deus eorum in Sion.* From each side echoed the Alleluia; and it was to the sound of those words of Holy Scripture, chanted in Latin by the Celtic monks of Wales and Ireland, that the two apostles of the Picts and Scots met at what had been the extreme boundary of the Roman Empire and limit of the power of the Cæsars, and upon a soil henceforth for ever freed from paganism and idolatry. They embraced each other tenderly, and passed several days in intimate and friendly intercourse.

The historian who has preserved for us the account of this interview does not conceal a less edifying incident. He confesses that some robbers had joined themselves to the following of the abbot of Iona, and that they took advantage of the general enthusiasm to steal a ram from the bishop's flock. They were soon taken; but Kentigern pardoned them. Columba and his fellow-apostle exchanged their pastoral cross before they parted, in token of mutual affection.[1] Another annalist describes them as living together for six months in the monastery which Columba had just

[1] "Sancti viri famam audiens, ad illum venire, visitare et familiaritatem ejus habere cupiebat . . . cum multa discipulorum turba. . . . In tertia turma senes decora canitie venerabiles. . . . Appropinquantes ad invicem sancti in amplexus mutuos et oscula sancta ruunt. Venerunt cum sancto Columba quidam filii Belial ad furta et peccata assueti. . . . In signum mutuæ dilectionis alterius baculum suscepit."—BOLLAND., p. 821. The cross given by Columba to Kentigern was long preserved and venerated in the Anglo-Saxon monastery of Ripon, Yorkshire.

founded at Dunkeld, and together preaching the faith to the inhabitants of Athol and the mountainous regions inhabited by the Picts.[1]

I know not how far we may put faith in another narrative of the same author, which seems rather borrowed from the Gallo-Breton epic of Tristan and Iseult than from monastic legend, but which has nevertheless remained Kentigern's most popular title to fame. The wife of King Roderick, led astray by a guilty passion for a knight of her husband's court, had the weakness to bestow upon him a ring which had been given to her by the king. When Roderick was out hunting with this knight, the two took refuge on the banks of the Clyde during the heat of the day, and the knight, falling asleep, unwittingly stretched out his hand, upon which the king saw the ring which he had given to the queen as a token of his love. It was with difficulty that he restrained himself from killing the knight on the spot; but he subdued his rage, and contented himself by taking the ring from his finger and throwing it into the river, without awakening the guilty sleeper. When he had returned to the town he demanded his ring from the queen, and, as she could not produce it, threw her into prison, and gave orders for her execution. She obtained, however, a delay of three days, and having in vain sought the ring from the knight to whom she had given it, she had recourse to the protection of St. Kentigern. The good pastor knew or divined all—the ring, found in a salmon which he had caught in the Clyde, was already in his hands. He sent it to the queen, who showed it to her husband, and thus escaped the punishment which awaited her. Roderick even asked her pardon on his knees, and offered to punish her accusers. From this, however, she dissuaded him, and, hastening to Kentigern, confessed her fault to him, and was commanded to pass the rest of her life in penitence. It is for this reason that the ancient effigies of the apostle of Strathclyde represent him as

[1] Hector Boetius, *Hist. Scotorum*, l. ix.

holding always the episcopal cross in one hand, and in the other a salmon with a ring in its mouth.[1]

But neither Kentigern, whose labours can scarcely be said to have survived him, nor Columba, whose influence upon the Picts and Scots was so powerful and lasting, exercised any direct or efficacious action upon the Anglo-Saxons, who became stronger and more formidable from day to day, and whose ferocious incursions threatened the Caledonian tribes no less than the Britons. It is apparent, however, that the great abbot of Iona did not share the repugnance, which had hardened into a system of repulsion, of the Welsh clergy for the Saxon race: express mention, on the contrary, is made in the most authentic documents connected with his history, of Saxon monks, who had been admitted into the community of Iona. One of them, for instance, had the office of baker there, and was reckoned among Columba's intimates.[2] But nothing indicates that these Saxons, who were enrolled under the authority of Columba, exercised any influence from thence upon their countrymen. On the contrary, while the Scotic-Briton missionaries spread over all the corners of Caledonia, and while Columba and his disciples carried the light of the Gospel into the northern districts where it had never penetrated, the Christian faith and the Catholic Church languished and gave up the ghost in the southern part of the island under the ruins heaped up everywhere by the Saxon conquest.

[1] "Contigit reginam . . . pretiosum annulum ob immensum amorem sibi a rege commendatum eidem militi contulisse. . . . Discopulatis canibus. . . . Fatigatus autem miles extenso brachio dormire cœpit. . . . Quum illa secreto militi in vanum mittens proferre non posset. . . . Lacrymosis precibus rem gestam sancto Kentigerno per nuntium exposuit. . . . Contristatus rex pro illatis reginæ injuriis, et veniam flexis genibus petens."—BOLLAND., p. 820; compare p. 815.

[2] Cummineus (apud Colgan, p. 320) mentions two Saxons: "Quidam religiosus frater, Genereus nomine, Saxo natione, pictor opere." And subsequently: "Duo ejus discipuli, Lugneus filius Blas et Pillo Saxo genere." Adamnan (iii. 10–22) corrects the conclusions which some authors have drawn from the word *pictor* by employing the words *opus pistorium exercens*. See *ante*, page 47.

Paganism and barbarism, vanquished by the Gospel in the Highlands of the north, again arose and triumphed in the south—in the most populous, accessible, and flourishing districts—throughout all that country, which was destined hereafter to play so great a part in the world, and which already began to call itself England. From 569 to 586—ten years before the death of Columba, and at the period when his authority was best established and most powerful in the north—the last champions of Christian Britain were finally cast out beyond the Severn, while at the same time new bands of Anglo-Saxons in the north, driving back the Picts to the other side of the Tweed, and crossing the Humber to the south, founded the future kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria. It is true that at a later period the sons of Columba carried the Gospel to those Northumbrians and Mercians. But at the end of the sixth century, after a hundred and fifty years of triumphant invasions and struggles, the Saxons had not yet encountered in any of the then Christian, or at least converted nations (Britons, Scots, and Picts), which they had assailed, fought, and vanquished, either missionaries disposed to announce the good news to them, nor priests capable of maintaining the precious nucleus of faith among the conquered races. In 586 the two last bishops of conquered Britain, those of London and York, abandoned their churches and took refuge in the mountains of Wales, carrying with them the sacred vessels and holy relics which they had been able to save from the rapacity of the idolaters. Other husbandmen were then necessary. From whence were they to come? From the same inextinguishable centre, whence light had been brought to the Irish by Patrick, and to the Britons and Scots by Palladius, Ninian, and Germain.

And already they are here! At the moment when Columba approached the term of his long career in his northern isle, a year before his death, the envoys of Gregory the Great left Rome, and landed, where Cæsar had landed, upon the English shore.

BOOK X

ST. AUGUSTIN OF CANTERBURY AND THE ROMAN MISSIONARIES IN ENGLAND, 597–633.

Hodie illuxit nobis dies redemptionis novæ, reparationis antiquæ, felicitatis æternæ.—*Christmas Office, Roman Breviary.*

CHAPTER I

MISSION OF ST. AUGUSTIN

Origin and character of the Anglo-Saxons.—They have not to struggle, like the Franks, against the Roman Decadence.—The seven kingdoms of the Heptarchy.—Institutions, social and political: government patriarchal and federal; seigneury of the proprietors: the *witena-gemot* or parliament; social inequality, the *ceorls* and the *eorls;* individual independence and aristocratic federation; fusion of the two races.—The conquered Britons lose the Christian faith.—Vices of the conquerors: slavery; commerce in human flesh.—The young Angles in the Roman market seen and bought by the monk Gregory.—Elected Pope, Gregory undertakes to convert the Angles by means of the monks of his monastery of Mt. Cœlius, under the conduct of the abbot Augustin.—Critical situation of the Papacy.—Journey of the missionary monks across Gaul; their doubts; letters of Gregory.—Augustin lands at the same spot as Cæsar and the Saxon conquerors in the Isle of Thanet.—King Ethelbert: the queen, Bertha, already a Christian.—First interview under the oak; Ethelbert grants leave to preach.—Entry of the missionaries into Canterbury.—The spring-tide of the Church in England.—Baptism of Ethelbert.—Augustin Archbishop of Canterbury.—The palace of the king changed into a cathedral.—Monastery of St. Augustin beyond the walls of Canterbury.—Donation from the king and the parliament.

Who then were the Anglo-Saxons, upon whom so many efforts were concentrated, and whose conquest is ranked, not without reason, among the most fruitful and most happy that the Church has ever accomplished? Of all the Germanic tribes, the most stubborn, intrepid, and independent, this people seem to have transplanted with themselves into the great island which owes to them its name, the genius of the Germanic race, in order that it might bear on this predestined soil its richest and most abundant fruits. The Saxons brought with them a language, a character, and institutions stamped with a strong and invincible originality. Language,

character, institutions, have triumphed, in their essential features, over the vicissitudes of time and fortune—have outlived all ulterior conquests, as well as all foreign influences, and, plunging their vigorous roots into the primitive soil of Celtic Britain, still exist at the indestructible foundation of the social edifice of England. Different from the Franks and Goths, who suffered themselves to be speedily neutralised or absorbed in Gaul, Italy, and Spain by the native elements, and still more by the remains of the Roman Decadence, the Saxons had the good fortune to find in Britain a soil free from imperial pollution. Less alienated from the Celtic Britons by their traditions and institutions —perhaps even by their origin—than by the jealousies and resentments of conquest, they had not after their victory to struggle against a spirit radically opposed to their own. Keeping intact and untamable their old Germanic spirit, their old morals, their stern independence, they gave from that moment to the free and proud genius of their race a vigorous upward impulse which nothing has ever been able to bear down.

Starting in three distinct and successive emigrations from the peninsular region which separates the Baltic from the North Sea, they had found in the level shores of Britain a climate and an aspect like those of their native country. At the end of a century and a half of bloody contests they had made themselves masters of all that now bears the name of England, except the coast and the hilly regions of the west. They had founded there, by fire and sword, the seven kingdoms so well known under the title of the Heptarchy, which have left their names to several of the existing divisions of that country, where nothing falls into irreparable ruin, because everything there, as in nature, takes a new form and a fresh life. The Jutes, the first and most numerous immigrants, had established in the angle of the island nearest to Germany, the kingdom of Kent, and occupied a part of the coast of the Channel (the Isle of Wight and Hampshire).

Then the Saxons, properly so called, spreading out and consolidating themselves from the east to the south, and from the south to the west, had stamped their name and their authority on the kingdoms of Essex, Sussex, and Wessex.[1] Finally, the Angles laid hold of the north and the east, and there planted, first, the kingdom of East Anglia on the coast of the North Sea, and next that of Mercia in the unoccupied territory between the Thames and the Humber; then, to the north of the latter river, the largest of all the Saxon kingdoms, Northumbria, almost always divided into two, Deira and Bernicia, the confines of which stretched away to join the Picts and Scots, beyond even the limits which the Roman domination had lately reached.

This race of pirates and plunderers, hunters and robbers of their kind, possessed nevertheless the essential elements of social order. They made this clearly apparent as soon as they were able to settle down, and to adjust their settlements on that insular soil which the Britons had not been able to defend against the Romans, nor the Romans against the barbarians of the north, nor these last against the hardy seamen from the east. The Anglo-Saxons alone have been able to establish there an immovable order of society, whose first foundations were laid when the missionary monks came to bring to them the lights of faith and of Christian virtue.

At the end of the sixth century the Anglo-Saxons already formed a great people, subject, as the Celtic races had been, to the patriarchal and federal rule, which so happily distinguished those brave and free nations from the rabble corrupted by the solitary despotism of Rome. But among them, as among all the Germanic races, this government was secured by the powerful guarantee of property. The wandering and disorderly clan, the primitive band of pirates and

[1] Saxons of the East, the South, and the West. The existing county of Middlesex bears witness to the same origin; it is the region inhabited by the Saxons of the Middle.

pillagers, disappears, or transforms itself, in order to make room for the family permanently established by the hereditary appropriation of the soil; and this soil was not only snatched from the vanquished race, but laboriously won from the forests, fens, and untilled moors. The chiefs and men of substance of these leading families formed a sovereign and warlike aristocracy, controlled by the kings, assemblies, and laws.

The kings all belonged to a kind of caste composed of the families which professed to trace their descent from Odin or Woden, the deified monarch of German mythology:[1] their royalty was elective and limited: they could do nothing without the consent of those who accepted them as chiefs, but not as masters. The assemblies, which at first resembled those which Tacitus has recorded as existing among the Germans, and composed of the entire tribe (*volk-mot*), were speedily limited to the elders, to the wise men (*witena-gemot*), to the chiefs of the principal families of each tribe or kingdom, and to men endowed with the double prerogative of blood and property. They were held in the open air, under venerable oaks, and at stated periods; they took part in all the affairs of the body-politic, and regulated with sovereign authority all rights that were established or defended by the laws.

The laws themselves were simply treaties of peace discussed and guaranteed by the grand council of each little nation, between the king and those on whom depended his security and his power; between the different parties in every process, civil and criminal; between different groups of free men, all armed and all possessors of lands, incessantly exposed to risk their life, their possessions, the honour and safety of their wives, children, kindred, dependants, and friends, in daily conflicts springing from that individual right of making war which is to be found at the root of all German liberty and legislation.[2]

[1] ETHELWERDI *Chronic.*, lib. i. p. 474, ap. Savile.

[2] PALGRAVE, *The Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, London, 1832. LAPPENBERG, *Geschichte von England*, Hamburg, 1834. KEMBLE,

Disparity of rank, which was in ancient times the inseparable companion of freedom, existed among the Saxons, as it did everywhere. The class of freemen—*ceorls*—possessors of land and of political power, who constituted the vital strength of the nation, had under them not only slaves, the fruit of their wars and conquests, but in much greater number servitors, labourers, dependants, who had not the same rights as they possessed; but they in their turn acknowledged as superiors the nobles, the *eorls*, who were born to command, and to fill the offices of priest, judge, and chief, under the primary authority of the king.[1]

Thus that part of Great Britain which has since taken the name of England, was at this early period made up of an aggregation of tribes and independent communities, among which the exigencies of a common struggle against their warlike neighbours of the north and west helped to develop a gradual tendency towards union. It settled into an aristocratic federation, in which families of a reputedly divine origin presided over the social and military life of each tribe, but in which personal independence was at the base of the whole fabric. This independence was always able to reclaim its rights when a prince more than ordinarily dexterous and energetic encroached upon them. Its influence was everywhere felt in establishing and maintaining social life on the principle of free association for mutual benefit.[2] All that the freemen had not expressly given over to the chiefs established by themselves, or to associates freely accepted by them, remained for ever their own inviolable

Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici (London, 1839–48), and *The Saxons in England*, London, 1849. Baron D'ECKSTEIN, various notices and memoirs.

[1] The Anglo-Saxon laws and diplomas, and particularly the charters of monastic endowments, constantly repeat this distinction between *ceorls* and *eorls*, which is found in the Scandinavian mythology, between the *Karls* and the *Jarls*, the offspring of the intercourse of a god with two different women. See the song of the first Edda, entitled *Rigsmal*. The word *ceorl* is the parent of the *churl* of modern English; as *eorl* is perpetuated in *earl*. The one has fallen in dignity, the other has risen.

[2] KEMBLE, *Saxons in England*, vol. ii. p. 312.

possession. Such, at that obscure and remote epoch, as in our day, was the fundamental and gloriously unalterable principle of English public life.

The British population, which had survived the fury of the Saxon Conquest, and which had not been able or willing to seek for refuge in the mountains and peninsulas of Wales and Cornwall, seems to have accommodated itself to the new order of things. When the Conquest was fully achieved, in those districts where the indigenous race had not been completely exterminated,[1] no traces of insurrection or of general discontent are to be found among the British; and the opinion of those who maintain that the condition of the mass of the British population remaining in the conquered regions was not worse under the Saxon invaders than it had been under the yoke of the Romans, or even under that of their native princes, so reviled by their compatriot the historian Gildas, may be admitted as probable.[2] It may even be supposed that this fusion of the conquerors and the conquered was productive of great benefit to the former. It would be hard to say whether the heroic tenacity which has become the distinctive characteristic of the English may not have been derived mainly from that vigorous race which, after having coped with Cæsar, proved itself the only one among all the nations subjected to the Roman yoke capable of struggling for two centuries against the invasion of the barbarians.[3]

[1] It has been already stated that in some districts the Saxons annihilated the conquered population. But this was only in exceptional cases. See on this subject the excellent summary of Burke in his *Abridged Essay on the History of England*—a work too much forgotten, though altogether worthy of the greatest of Englishmen.

[2] Such is, especially, the opinion of Kemble, who otherwise generalises too freely upon the exaggerations of history in relation to the oppression or extermination of vanquished nations. The events which since 1772 have occurred in Poland, in Lithuania, in Circassia, and elsewhere, prove that it is very possible, even in the full light of modern civilisation, and under princes consecrated before the altar of the living God, to proceed with an invincible determination to the destruction of human races.

[3] La Borderie, p. 231.

But this assimilation of the two races could not but operate to the prejudice of the Christian faith. Unlike the barbarian invaders of the Continent, the Saxons did not adopt the religion of the people they had subdued. In Gaul, Spain, and Italy, Christianity had flourished anew, and gained fresh strength under the dominion of the Franks and the Goths; it had conquered the conquerors. In Britain it disappeared under the pressure of the alien conquest. No traces of Christianity remained in the districts under Saxon sway when Rome sent thither her missionaries. Here and there a ruined church might be found, but not one living Christian amongst the natives;[1] conquerors and conquered alike were lost in the darkness of paganism.

It is not necessary to inquire whether, along with this proud and vigorous independence, in which we have recognised a rare and singularly advanced condition of political intelligence and social vitality, the Anglo-Saxons exhibited moral virtues of an equally elevated order. Such an assertion no one would be disposed to believe. Certainly "there existed under this native barbarism noble dispositions unknown to the Roman world. Under the brute the free man, and also the man of heart, might always be discovered."[2] Even more, intermingled with daily outbursts of daring and of violence there might also be found miracles of heroic and simple devotion—of sincere and lofty enthusiasm—which emulated or forestalled Christianity. But alongside of these wonders of primitive virtue, what miracles of vice and crime, of avarice, lust, and ferocity! The religion of their Scandinavian forefathers, whose primitive myths concealed no small amount of traditional truth under symbols full of grace and majesty, was only too soon corrupted or obscured. It did not preserve them from any excess, superstition, or fetishism: perhaps not even from the human sacrifices which were known to all other pagan nations. What could be

[1] BURKE, *Works*, vol. vi. p. 216.

[2] TAINE, *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise.*

expected in point of morality from people accustomed to invoke and to worship Woden, the god of massacres, Freya, the Venus of the North, the goddess of sensuality, and all these bloody and obscene gods of whom one had for his emblem a naked sword, and another the hammer with which he broke the heads of his enemies?[1] The immortality which was promised to them in their Walhalla but reserved for them new days of slaughter and nights of debauch, spent in drinking deep from the skulls of their victims. And in this world their life was but too often only a prolonged orgie of carnage, rapine, and lechery. The traditional respect for woman which marked the Germanic tribes was limited among the Saxons, as elsewhere, by singular exceptions, and did not extend beyond the princesses or the daughters of the victorious and dominant race.

Such mercy as they ever showed to the vanquished consisted only in sparing their lives in order to reduce them to servitude, and sell them as slaves. That frightful slave-traffic which has disgraced successively all pagan and all Christian nations was among them carried on with a kind of inveterate passion.[2] It needed, as we shall see, whole centuries of incessant efforts to extirpate it. Nor was it only captives and vanquished foes that they condemned to this extremity of misfortune and shame: it was their kindred, their fellow-countrymen; even, like Joseph's brethren, those of their own blood, their sons and daughters, that they set up to auction and sold to merchants who came from the Continent to supply themselves in the Anglo-Saxon market with these human chattels. It was by this infamous commerce that Great Britain, having become almost as great a stranger to the rest of Europe as she was before the days of

[1] See the interesting chapter on the religion of the Germans in Ozanam's *Germains avant le Christianisme*, 1847.

[2] "Venales ex Northumbria pueri, familiari et pene ingenita illi nationi consuetudine, adeo ut, sicut nostra quoque sæcula viderunt non dubitarent arctissimas necessitudines sub prætextu minimorum commodorum distrahere."—WILLELMUS MALMESBURIENSIS, *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, i. 3.

Cæsar, re-entered the circle of the nations, making herself known once more, as in the time of Cæsar, when Cicero anticipated no other profit to Rome from the expedition of the proconsul than the produce of the sale of British slaves.[1]

Nevertheless, it was from the depth of this shameful abyss that God was about to evolve the opportunity of delivering England from the fetters of paganism, of introducing her by the hand of the greatest of the Popes into the bosom of the Church, and, at the same time, of bringing her within the pale of Christian civilisation.

Who will ever explain to us how these traffickers in men found a market for their merchandise at Rome? Yes, at Rome, in the full light of Christianity, six centuries after the birth of the Divine Deliverer, and three centuries after the peace of the Church; at Rome, governed since Constantine by Christian emperors, and in which was gradually developing the temporal sovereignty of the Popes. It was so, however, in the year of grace 586 or 587, under Pope Pelagius II. Slaves of both sexes and of all countries, and among them some children, young Saxons, were exposed for sale in the Roman Forum like any other commodity. Priests and monks mingled with the crowd that came to bid or to look on at the auction; and among the spectators appears the gentle, the generous, the immortal Gregory.[2] He thus learned to detest this leprosy of slavery which it was afterwards given him to restrict and to contend against, though not to extirpate it.[3]

This scene, which the father of English history found among the traditions of his Northumbrian ancestors, and

[1] "Britannici belli exitus exspectatur. . . . Illud cognitum est, neque argenti scripulum ullum esse in illa insula, neque ullam spem prædæ nisi ex mancipiis."—*Epist. ad. Attic.*, iv. 16.

[2] "Die quadam cum advenientibus nuper mercatoribus multa venalia in forum fuissent collata, multique ad emendum confluxissent, et ipsum Gregorium inter alios advenisse, ac vidisse inter alia pueros venales positos."—BEDE, ii. 1.

[3] JOAN DIAC., *Vita S. Gregorii*, iv. 45, 46, 47. S. GREG., *Epist.*, iv. 9, 13; vii. 24, 38, and elsewhere.

the dialogue in which are portrayed with such touching and quaint originality the pious and compassionate spirit of Gregory, and at the same time his strange love of punning, has been a hundred times rehearsed. Every one knows how, at the sight of these young slaves, struck with the beauty of their countenances, the dazzling purity of their complexions, the length of their fair locks (probable index of aristocratic birth), he inquired what was their country and their religion. The slave-dealer informed him that they came from the island of Britain, where every one had the same beauty of complexion, and that they were heathens. Heaving a profound sigh, "What evil luck," cried Gregory, "that the Prince of Darkness should possess beings with an aspect so radiant, and that the grace of these countenances should reflect a soul void of the inward grace! But what nation are they of?" "They are Angles." "They are well named, for these Angles have the faces of angels; and they must become the brethren of the angels in heaven. From what province have they been brought?" "From Deïra" (one of the two kingdoms of Northumbria). "Still good," answered he. "*De ira eruti*—they shall be snatched from the ire of God, and called to the mercy of Christ. And how name they the king of their country?" "Alle or Ælla." "So be it; he is right well named, for they shall soon sing the Alleluia in his kingdom."[1]

It is natural to believe that the rich and charitable abbot

[1] "Nec silentio prætereunda opinio quæ de beato Gregorio traditione majorum ad nos usque perlata est. . . . Candidi et lactei corporis, venusti vultus, capillorum forma egregia . . . crine rutila. . . . Intimo ex corde suspiria ducens . . . interrogavit mercatorem. . . . De Britanniæ insula cujus incolarum omnis facies simili candore fulgescit. . . . Heu proh dolor! quod tam lucidi vultus . . . tantaque gratia frontispicii. . . . Bene Angli quasi angeli, quia et angelicos vultus habent. . . . Bene quia rex dicitur Aelle. Alleluia etenim in partibus illis oportet decantari."—BEDE, *loc. cit.* PAUL DIAC., *Vita S. Gregorii*, c. 14. JOAN DIAC., *Vita S. Gregorii*, i. 21. GOTSELINI, *Historia Maior de Vita S. Augustini*, c. 4. LAPPENBERG, p. 138. The name of Ælla fixes the date of this incident to a period necessarily prior to the death of this prince in 588.

bought these captive children, and that he conveyed them at once to his own home—that is to say, to the palace of his father, where he was born, which he had changed into a monastery, and which was not far from the Forum where the young Britons were exposed for sale. The purchase of these three or four slaves was thus the origin of the redemption of all England.

An Anglo-Saxon chronicler, a Christian but a layman, who wrote four centuries later, but who exemplifies the influence of domestic traditions among that people by giving to his own genealogy a very high rank in the history of his race,[1] says expressly that Gregory lodged his guests in the *triclinium*, where he loved to serve with his own hand the table of the poor, and that after he had instructed and baptized them, it was his desire to take them with him as his companions, and to return to their native land in order to convert it to Christ. All authors unanimously admit that from that moment he conceived the grand design of bringing over the Anglo-Saxons to the Catholic Church. To this design he consecrated a perseverance, a devotion, and a prudence which the greatest men have not surpassed. We have already seen how, after this scene in the slave market, he sought and obtained from the Pope permission to go as a missionary to the Anglo-Saxons, and how, at the tidings of his departure, the Romans, after overwhelming the Pope with reproaches, ran after their future pontiff, and, overtaking him three days' journey from Rome, brought him back by force to the Eternal City.[2]

Scarcely had he been elected Pope, when his great and cherished design became the object of his constant thought. His intrepid soul dwells on it with an unfailing interest, and his vast correspondence everywhere testifies its existence.[3]

[1] ETHELWERDI *Chronic.*, lib. ii. c. 1. See his curious preamble to his cousin Matilda, in Savile, and the remarks of Lappenberg, p. 55.

[2] See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 18.

[3] *Epist.*, ix. 108, ad Syagrium episc. Augustodunensem. "Cum pro convertendis Anglis-Saxonibus, quemadmodum in monachatu suo proposuerat, assiduis cogitationum fluctibus urgeretur."—JOAN DIAC., ii. 33.

While waiting until he should discover the fit man to conduct this special mission, he never forgot the English slaves —the heathen children whose sad lot had been the means of revealing to him the conquest which God had in store for him, and whose brothers were to be found in the slave-markets of other Christian countries. He writes to the priest Candidius, who had the management of the patrimony of the Roman Church in Gaul, "We charge you to lay out the money which you have received, in the purchase of young English slaves, of seventeen or eighteen years of age, whom you shall train in the monastery for the service of God. In this way the coins of Gaul, which are not current here, will be put on the spot to a suitable use. If you can draw anything from the revenues which they say have been withheld from us, you must employ it equally either to procure clothing for the poor or to buy these young slaves. But as they will yet be heathens, they must be accompanied by a priest, who may baptize them if they fall sick by the way."[1] At last, in the sixth year of his pontificate, he decided to select as the apostles of the distant island, whither his thoughts continually carried him, the monks of the Monastery of St. Andrew, on Mount Cœlius, and to appoint as their leader Augustin, the prior of that beloved house.

This monastery is the one which now bears the name of St. Gregory, and is known to all who have visited Rome. That incomparable city contains few spots more attractive and more worthy of eternal remembrance. The sanctuary occupies the western angle of Mount Cœlius, and the site of the hallowed grove and fountain which Roman mythology has consecrated by the graceful and touching fable of Numa and the nymph Egeria.[2] It is at an equal distance from the

[1] "Volumus ut dilectio tua . . . quatenus solidi Galliarum qui in terra nostra expendi non possunt apud locum proprium utiliter expendantur. . . . Sed quia pagani sunt . . . volo ut cum eis presbyter transmittatur ne quid ægritudinis contingat in via, ut quos morituros conspexerit, debeat baptizare."—*Epist.*, vi. 7.

[2] AMPERE, *L'Histoire Romaine à Rome*, pp. 4, 370, 498.

Circus Maximus, the baths of Caracalla, and the Coliseum, and near to the church of the holy martyrs John and Paul. The cradle of English Christianity is thus planted on the soil steeped with the blood of many thousands of martyrs. In front rises the Mons Palatinus, the cradle of heathen Rome, still covered with the vast remains of the palace of the Cæsars. To the left of the grand staircase which leads to the existing monastery, three small buildings stand apart on a plot of grass.[1] On the door of one you read these words —*Triclinium Pauperum ;* and within is preserved the table at which every day were seated the twelve beggars whom Gregory fed and personally waited upon. The other is dedicated to the memory of his mother, Silvia, who had followed his example in devoting herself to a religious life, and whose portrait he had caused to be painted in the porch of his monastery.[2]

Between these two small edifices stands the oratory dedicated by Gregory, while still a simple monk, to the apostle St. Andrew, at the time when he transformed his patrimonial mansion into the cloister whence were to issue the apostles of England. In the church of the monastery, which now belongs to the Camaldolites, is still shown the pulpit from which Gregory preached, the bed on which he took his brief repose, the altar before which he must have so often prayed for the conversion of his beloved English. On the façade of the church an inscription records that thence set out the first apostles of the Anglo-Saxons, and preserves their names.[3]

[1] GERBET, *Esquisse de Rome Chrétienne*, vol. i. p. 447.

[2] JOAN DIAC., *Vita Gregorii*, iv. c. 83.

[3] The following is the exact text of the inscription, transcribed by the friendly hand of an eloquent monk of our time and country, Father Hyacinth, of the Barefooted Carmelites :—

EX HOC MONASTERIO
PRODIERVNT

S. GREGORIVS. M. FVNDATOR. ET. PARENS.—S. ELVTHERIVS. AB.—S. HILARION. AB.—S. AVGVSTINVS. ANGLOR. APOSTOL.—S. LAVRENTIVS. CANTVAR. ARCHIEP.—S. MELLITVS. LONDINEN. EP. MOX. ARCHIEP.

Under the porch are seen the tombs of some generous Englishmen who died in exile for their fidelity to the religion which these apostles taught them; and, among other sepulchral inscriptions, this which follows may be remarked and remembered: "Here lies Robert Pecham, an English Catholic, who, after the disruption of England and the Church, quitted his country, unable to endure life there without the faith, and who, coming to Rome, died, unable to endure life here without his country." [1]

Where is the Englishman worthy of the name who, in looking from the Palatine to the Coliseum, could contemplate without emotion and without remorse this spot from whence have come to him the faith and name of Christian, the Bible of which he is so proud—the Church herself of which he has preserved but the shadow? Here were the enslaved children of his ancestors gathered together and saved. On these stones they knelt who made his country Christian. Under these roofs was the grand design conceived by a saintly mind, entrusted to God, blessed by Him, accepted and carried out by humble and generous Christians. By these steps descended the forty monks who bore to England the word of God and the light of the Gospel along with Catholic unity, the apostolical succession, and the rule of St. Benedict. No country ever received the gift

CANTVAR.—S. IVSTVS EP. ROFFENSIS.—S. PAVLINVS. EP. EBORAC.—S. MAXIMIANVS. SYRACVSAN. EP.—SS. ANTONIVS. MERVLVS. ET. JOANNES. MONACHI.—S. PETRVS. AB. CANTVAR.

HONORIVS. ARCHIEP. CANTVAR.—MARINIANVS. ARCHIEP. RAVEN.—PROBVS.—XENODOCHI. IEROSOLYMIT. CURATOR. A. S. GREGORIO. ELECT.—SABINVS. CALLIPOLIT. EP.—FELIX. MESSANEN. EP.—GREGORIVS. DIAC. CARD. S. EUSTACH.

HIC. ETIAM. DIU. VIXIT. M. GREGORII. MATER. S. SILVIA. HOC. MAXIME. COLENDA. QVOD. TANTVM. PIETATIS. SAPIENTIAE. ET. DOCTRINAE. LVMEN. PEPERERIT.

[1] Quoted in the address of M. Augustin Cochin to the Congress at Malines, 20th August 1863.

of salvation more directly from popes and monks, and none, alas! so soon and so cruelly betrayed them.

Nothing could be more sad and sombre than the state of the Church at the epoch when Gregory resolved to put his project into execution. This great man—by turns soldier, general, statesman, administrator, and legislator, but always, and before all, pontiff and apostle—had need of more than human boldness to take in hand distant conquests, surrounded as he was by perils and disasters, and at a moment when Rome, devastated by plague, famine, and the inundations of the Tiber, mercilessly taxed and shamelessly abandoned by the Byzantine emperors, was struggling against the aggressions of the Lombards, which became every day more menacing.[1] It is not without reason that a writer more learned than enthusiastic represents the expedition of Augustin as an act as heroic as Scipio's departure for Africa while Hannibal was at the gates of Rome.[2]

Absolutely nothing is known of Augustin's history previous to the solemn days on which, in obedience to the commands of the pontiff, who had been his abbot, he and his forty comrades tore themselves from the motherly bosom of that community which was to them as their native land. He must, as prior of the monastery, have exhibited distinguished qualifications ere he could have been chosen by Gregory for such a mission. But there is nothing to show that his companions were at that time animated with the same zeal which inspired the Pope. They arrived without hindrance in Provence, and stopped for some time at Lerins, in that Mediterranean isle of the Saints, where, a century and a half before, Patrick, the monastic apostle of the western isle of Saints, had sojourned for nine years before he was sent by Pope Celestine to evangelise Ireland. But, there or elsewhere, the Roman monks received frightful accounts of the country which they were going to convert. They were told that the

[1] See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 13.

[2] KEMBLE, *Saxons in England*, vol. ii. p. 357.

Anglo-Saxon people, of whose language they were ignorant, were a nation of wild beasts, thirsting for innocent blood—a race whom it was impossible to approach or conciliate, and to land on whose coast was to rush to certain destruction. They took fright at these tales; and in place of continuing their route, they persuaded Augustin to return to Rome to beseech the Pope to relieve them from a journey so toilsome, so perilous, and so useless.[1] Instead of listening to their request, Gregory sent Augustin back to them with a letter in which they were ordered to recognise him henceforth as their abbot —to obey him in everything, and, above all, not to let themselves be terrified by the toils of the way or by the tongue of the detractor. "Better were it," wrote Gregory, "not to begin that good work at all, than to give it up after having commenced it. . . . Forward, then, in God's name! . . . The more you have to suffer, the brighter will your glory be in eternity. May the grace of the Almighty protect you, and grant to me to behold the fruit of your labours in the eternal country; if I cannot share your toil, I shall none the less rejoice in the harvest, for God knows that I lack not good will."[2]

Augustin was the bearer of numerous letters of the same date,[3] written by the Pope first of all to the Abbot of Lerins, to the Bishop of Aix, and to the Governor of Provence, thanking them for the hearty welcome they had given to his missionaries; and next to the Bishops of Tours, of Marseilles, of Vienne, and of Autun; and, above all, to Virgilius, Metropolitan of Arles, warmly recommending to them Augustin and his mission, but without explaining its nature or its aim. He acted differently in his letters to the two young kings of

[1] "Augustini sanctorumque fratrum a maternis visceribus monasterialis ecclesiæ avulserunt. . . . Nuntiatur quod gens quam peterent immanior belluis existeret."—GOTSELINUS, *Historia Maior*, c. 3, 6. "Perculsi timore inerti . . . ne tam periculosam, tam laboriosam, tam inutilem prædicationem adire deberent."—BEDE, i. 23.

[2] "Quatenus etsi vobiscum laborare nequeo, simul in gaudio retributionis inveniar, quia laborare scilicet volo."—*Ibid.*, i. 23.

[3] 23rd July 596.

Austrasia and of Burgundy, and to their mother, Brunehaut, who reigned in their name over the whole of Eastern France. In appealing to the orthodoxy which distinguished beyond all others the Frank nation, he announces to them that he has learned that the English were disposed to receive the Christian faith, but that the priests of the neighbouring regions (that is, of Wales) took no pains to preach it to them; wherefore he asks that the missionaries sent by him to enlighten and save the English may obtain interpreters to go with them across the Straits, and a royal safe-conduct to guarantee their safety during their journey through France.[1]

Thus stimulated and recommended, Augustin and his monks took courage and again set out upon their way. Their obedience won the victory which the magnanimous ardour of the great Gregory had failed to secure. They traversed the whole of France, ascending the Rhone and descending the Loire, protected by the princes and bishops to whom the Pope had recommended them, but not without suffering more than one insult at the hands of the lower orders, especially in Anjou, where these forty men, in pilgrim garb, walking together, resting sometimes at night under no other shelter than that of a large tree, were regarded as were-wolves, and were assailed (by the women particularly) with yellings and abuse.[2]

After having thus traversed the whole of Frankish Gaul, Augustin and his companions brought their journey to a close on the southern shore of Great Britain, at the point where it approaches nearest to the Continent, and where the previous conquerors of England had already landed: Julius Cæsar, who revealed it to the Roman world; and Hengist with his Saxons, who brought to it with its new name the

[1] *Epist.*, vi. 53–59.

[2] "Tot homines peregrinos pedestri incessu et habitu humiles quasi tot lupos et ignota monstra repulere. Mulierculæ simul conglomeratæ tanta . . . insania, tribulatu, despectu, subsannatione, derisione in sanctos Dei sunt debacchatæ. . . . Stabat juxta ulmus ampla . . . sub hac sancti volentes ipsa nocte requiescere."—GOTSELINUS, c. 10.

ineffaceable impress of the Germanic race. To these two conquests, a third—destined to be the last—was now about to succeed. For it is impossible to place in the same rank the victorious invasions of the Danes and the Normans, who, akin to the Saxons in blood and manners, have indeed cruelly troubled the life of the English people, but have effected no radical change in its social and moral order, and have not been able to touch either its language, its religion, or its national character.

The new conquerors, like Julius Cæsar, arrived under the ensigns of Rome—but of Rome the Eternal, not the Imperial. They came to restore the law of the Gospel, which the Saxons had drowned in blood. But in setting, for ever, the seal of the Christian faith upon the soil of England, they struck no blow at the independent character and powerful originality of the people, whom, in converting them to the true faith, they succeeded in consolidating into a nation.

On the south side of the mouth of the river Thames, and at the north-east corner of the county of Kent, lies a district which is still called the Isle of Thanet, although the name of *isle* no longer befits it, as the arm of the sea which at one time separated it from the mainland is now little better than a brackish and marshy brook. There, where the steep white cliffs of the coast suddenly divide to make way for a sandy creek, near the ancient port of the Romans at Richborough, and between the modern towns of Sandwich and Ramsgate,[1] the Roman monks set foot for the first time on British soil.[2] The rock which received the first print of

[1] It is pleasant to know that in this same town of Ramsgate, on the shore where the abbot Augustin landed, the sons of St. Benedict have been able, after the lapse of thirteen centuries, to erect a new sanctuary, near to a church dedicated to St. Augustin, designed and built by the liberality of the great Catholic architect Pugin. This monastic colony belongs to the new Benedictine province of Subiaco.

[2] In a book entitled *Historical Memorials of Canterbury*, 1855, Dr. Stanley, Dean of Westminster, has examined and determined, with no less enthusiasm than scrupulous exactness, the facts relative to the arrival of St. Augustin. He has confirmed the already old opinion which fixes the very

the footsteps of Augustin was long preserved and venerated, and was the object of many pilgrimages, in gratitude to the living God for having led thither the apostle of England.[1]

Immediately on his arrival the envoy of Pope Gregory despatched the interpreters, with whom he had been provided in France, to the king of the country in which the missionaries had landed, to announce to him that they came from Rome, and that they brought to him the best of news —the true glad tidings—the promise of celestial joy, and of an eternal reign in the fellowship of the living and true God.[2]

The king's name was Ethelbert, which means in Anglo-Saxon *noble* and *valiant*.[3] Great-grandson of Hengist, the first of the Saxon conquerors, who himself was supposed to be a descendant of one of the three sons of Odin, he reigned for thirty-six years over the oldest kingdom of the Heptarchy —that of Kent—and had just gained over all the other Saxon kings and princes, even to the confines of Northumbria, that kind of military supremacy which was attached to the title of Bretwalda, or temporary chief of the Saxon Confederation.[4]

It was to be supposed that he would have a natural prepossession in favour of the Christian religion. It was the faith of his wife Bertha, who was the daughter of Caribert, king of the Franks of Paris, and grandson of Clovis, and whose mother was that Ingoberga whose gentle virtues and domestic troubles have been recorded by Gregory of Tours.[5]

place of his landing at a farm now called *Ebbsfleet*, situated upon a promontory, from which the sea has now withdrawn.

[1] STANLEY, p. 14. OAKLEY, *Life of St. Augustin*, 1844, p. 91. This life forms part of the interesting series of *Lives of the English Saints*, published by the principal writers of the Puseyite school before their conversion.

[2] "Mandavit se venisse de Roma et nuntium ferre optimum . . . æterna in cœlis gaudia et regnum sine fine cum Deo vivo et vero futurum."—BEDE, i. 25.

[3] The root *Ethel*, which we shall find in almost all the names, male and female, which we shall quote, corresponds to the German adjective *edel*, noble.

[4] BEDE, i. 25 ; ii. 3, 5.

[5] GREG. TURON., *Hist. Franc.*, iv. 26, ix. 26.

She had been affianced to the heathen king of the Saxons of Kent only on the condition that she should be free to observe the precepts and practices of her faith, under the care of a Gaulo-Frankish bishop, Liudhard of Senlis, who had remained with her until his death, which occurred immediately before the arrival of Augustin. Tradition records the gentle and lovable virtues of Queen Bertha, and her judicious zeal for the conversion of her husband and his subjects. It is believed to have been from her that Gregory received his information as to the desire of the English to be converted, with which he had enlisted the interest of Brunehaut and her sons.[1] The great-granddaughter of St. Clotilda seemed thus destined to be herself the St. Clotilda of England. But too little is known of her life: she has left but a brief and uncertain illumination on those distant and dark horizons over which she rises like a star, the herald of the sun of truth.

Meanwhile King Ethelbert did not immediately permit the Roman monks to visit him in the Roman city of Canterbury where he dwelt. While providing for their maintenance, he forbade their leaving the island on which they had landed until he had deliberated on the course he should pursue. At the close of some days he himself went to visit them, but he would not meet them except in the open air. It is difficult to imagine what pagan superstition made him dread foul play if he allowed himself to be brought under the same roof with the strangers. At the sound of his approach they advanced to meet him in procession.

"The history of the Church," says Bossuet,[2] "contains nothing finer than the entrance of the holy monk Augustin into the kingdom of Kent with forty of his companions,

[1] "Quam ea conducere a parentibus acceperat, ut ritum fidei ac religionis suæ cum episcopo quem ei adjutorem fidei dederant, nomine Liudhardo, inviolatam servare licentiam haberet."—BEDE, *loc. cit.* "Pervenit ad nos Anglorum gentem ad fidem Christianam Deo miserante desideranter velle converti."—S. GREGORII *Epist.*, vi. 58; compare *Epist.*, xi. 29.

[2] *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle.*

who, preceded by the cross and the image of the great King our Lord Jesus Christ, offered their solemn prayers for the conversion of England." At that solemn moment when, upon a soil once Christian, Christianity found itself once more face to face with idolatry, the strangers besought the true God to save, with their own souls, all those souls for whose love they had torn themselves from their peaceful cloister at home, and had taken this hard enterprise in hand. They chanted the litanies in use at Rome in the solemn and touching strains which they had learnt from Gregory, their spiritual father and the father of religious music. At their head marched Augustin, whose lofty stature and patrician presence attracted every eye, for, like Saul, "he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards."[1]

The king, surrounded by a great number of his followers, received them seated under a great oak, and made them sit down before him. After having listened to the address which they delivered to him and to the assembly, he gave them a loyal, sincere, and, as we should say in these days, truly liberal answer. "You make fair speeches and promises," he said, "but all this is to me new and uncertain. I cannot all at once put faith in what you tell me, and abandon all that I, with my whole nation, have for so long a time held sacred. But since you have come from so far away to impart to us what you yourselves, by what I see, believe to be the truth and the supreme good, we shall do you no hurt: on the contrary, we shall show you all hospitality, and shall take care to furnish you with the means of living. We shall not hinder you from preaching your religion, and you shall convert whom you can." By these words the king intimated to them his desire to reconcile fidelity to the national customs, with a respect for liberty of conscience too rarely found in history. The Catholic Church thus met,

[1] "Beati Augustini formam et personam patriciam, staturam proceram et arduam, adeo ut a scapulis populo superemineret."—GOTSEL., *Vita*, c. 45.

from her first entrance into England, that promise of liberty which has during so many ages been the first and most fundamental article of all English charters and constitutions.

Faithful to his engagement, Ethelbert allowed the missionaries to follow him to Canterbury, where he assigned them a dwelling, which still exists under the name of the Stable Gate. The forty missionaries made a solemn entry into the town, carrying their silver cross, along with a picture of Christ painted on wood, and chanting in unison the response of their litany, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, by Thy pity, to spare in Thy wrath this city and Thy holy house, for we have sinned. Alleluia." It was thus, says a monastic historian, that the first fathers and teachers of the faith in England entered their future metropolis, and inaugurated the triumphant labours of the Cross of Jesus.[1]

There was outside the town, to the east, a small church dedicated to St. Martin, dating from the time of the Romans, whither Queen Bertha was in the habit of going to pray, and to celebrate the offices of religion. Thither also went Augustin and his companions to chant their monastic office, to celebrate mass, to preach, and to baptize.[2] Here, then, we behold them, provided, thanks to the royal munificence, with the necessaries of life, endowed with the supreme blessing of liberty, and using that liberty in labouring to

[1] "Ad jussionem regis residentes, verbum Dei vitæ, una cum omnibus qui aderant ejus comitibus, prædicarent. . . . Pulchra sunt quidem verba et promissa, sed quia nova sunt et incerta. . . . Nec prohibemus quin omnes quos potestis fidei vestræ religionis prædicando societis. . . . Crucem pro vexilla ferentes argenteam et imaginem Domini salvatoris in tabula depictam, lætaniasque canentes. . . . Pro sua simul et eorum propter quos et ad quos venerant salute æterna . . . consona voce."—BEDE, i. 25. "Tali devotione proto-doctoribus et in fide Christi proto-patribus Angliæ metropolim suam cum triumphali crucis labore ingredientibus: *Aperite portas*," &c.—GOTSELINUS, *Historia Minor de Vita S. Aug.*, c. 12.

[2] The existing church, rebuilt in the thirteenth century, occupies the place of that which is for ever consecrated by the double memory of Bertha the queen and Augustin the archbishop. The baptismal fonts are shown there in which, according to tradition, King Ethelbert was baptized by immersion.

propagate the truth. They lived here, says the most truthful of their historians, the life of the apostles in the primitive Church—assiduous in prayer, in vigils, in fasts; they preached the word of life to all whom they could reach, and, despising this world's goods, accepting from their converts nothing beyond what was strictly necessary, lived in all harmony with their doctrine, and ever ready to suffer or to die for the truth they preached. The innocent simplicity of their life, and the heavenly sweetness of their doctrine, appeared to the Saxons arguments of an invincible eloquence; and every day the number of candidates for baptism increased.[1]

Such fair days occur at the outset of all great undertakings. They do not last, thanks to the lamentable and incurable infirmity of all human things; but yet they should never be forgotten, nor remembered without honour. They are the blossoming time of noble lives. History serves no more salutary purpose than in transmitting their perfume to us. The Church of Canterbury for a thousand years possessed unparalleled splendours; no Church in the world, after the Church of Rome, has been governed by greater men, or has waged more glorious conflicts. But nothing in her brilliant annals could eclipse the sweet and pure light of that humble beginning, where a handful of strangers, Italian monks, sheltered by the generous hospitality of an honest-hearted king, and guided by the inspiration of the greatest of the Popes, applied themselves in prayer, and abstinence, and toil, to the work of winning over the ancestors of a great people to God, to virtue, and to truth.

The good and loyal Ethelbert did not lose sight of them; soon, charmed like so many others by the purity of their life, and allured by their promises, the truth of which was

[1] "Paratum ad patiendum adversa quæque, vel etiam ad moriendum animum habendo. . . . Mirantes simplicitatem innocentis vitæ ac dulcedinem doctrinæ eorum cœlestis."—BEDE, i. 26.

attested by more than one miracle, he sought and obtained baptism at the hand of Augustin. It was on Whit Sunday,[1] in the year of grace 597, that this Anglo-Saxon king entered into the unity of the Holy Church of Christ. Since the baptism of Constantine, and excepting that of Clovis, there had not been any event of greater moment in the annals of Christendom.[2]

A crowd of Saxons followed the example of their king, and the missionaries issued from their first asylum to preach in all quarters, building churches also here and there. The king, faithful to the last to that noble respect for the individual conscience of which he had given proof even before he was a Christian, was unwilling to constrain any one to change his religion. He allowed himself to show no preference, save a deeper love for those who, baptized like himself, became his fellow-citizens in the heavenly kingdom. The Saxon king had learned from the Italian monks that no constraint is compatible with the service of Christ.[3] It was not to unite England to the Roman Church, it was in order to tear her from it, a thousand years after this, that another king and other apostles had to employ the torture and the stake.

In the meanwhile Augustin, perceiving that he should henceforward be at the head of an important Christian community, and in conformity to the Pope's instructions, returned to France in order to be there consecrated Archbishop of the English by the celebrated Metropolitan of

[1] 2nd June 597. [2] STANLEY, p. 19.

[3] "Ipse etiam inter alios delectatus vita mundissima sanctorum et promissis . . . quæ vere esse miraculorum quoque multorum ostensione firmaverant. . . . Unitati se sanctæ Ecclesiæ Christi credendo sociare. Quorum fidei et conversioni ita congratulatus esse rex perhibetur, ut nullum tamen cogeret ad Christianismum: sed tantummodo credentes arctiori dilectione, quasi concives sibi regni cœlestis, amplecteretur. Didicerat enim a doctoribus auctoribusque suæ salutis, servitium Christi voluntarium, non coactitium esse debere."—BEDE, i. 26. Yet Bede himself speaks, farther on, of those who had embraced the faith, "vel favore, vel timore regio" (ii. 5).

Arles, Virgilius, the former abbot of Lerins, whom Gregory had appointed his vicar over all the churches of the Frankish kingdom.

On his return to Canterbury he found that the example of the king and the labours of his companions had borne fruit beyond all expectation; so much so, that at the festival of Christmas in the same year, 597, more than 10,000 Anglo-Saxons presented themselves for baptism; and that sacrament was administered to them in the Thames at the mouth of the Medway, opposite that Isle of Sheppey, where is now situated one of the principal stations of the British fleet, and one of the grand centres of the maritime power of Great Britain.[1]

The first of the converts was also the first of the benefactors of the infant Church. Ethelbert, more and more imbued with respect and devotion for the faith which he had embraced, desired to give a notable pledge of his pious humility, by transferring to the new archbishop his own palace in the town of Canterbury, and establishing henceforth his royal residence at Reculver, an ancient Roman fortress on the adjacent shore of the island on which Augustin had landed. Besides the dwelling of the king thus transformed into a monastery for the archbishop and his monks, and on the site of an old church of the time of the Romans, a basilica which was hereafter to become, under the name of Christchurch, the metropolitan church of England, was commenced. Of this church Augustin was at once the first archbishop and the first abbot.[2]

The Pope had at first designed, as the seat of the new metropolis, the city of London, a Roman colony already famous from the time of the Emperors; whereas he had, perhaps, never heard the name of the residence of the

[1] S. GREGOR., *Epist.*, viii. 30. STANLEY, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[2] The immense Cathedral of Canterbury, the reconstruction of which was begun by Lanfranc in the eleventh century, occupies the site of this earlier church and of the palace of Ethelbert.

Saxon kings at Canterbury. But London was not within the kingdom of Ethelbert, and the selection of the Pope could not prevail against the motives which determined Augustin to choose, as the head and centre of the religious life of England, the capital of the king who had become his proselyte and his friend, standing, as it did, in the region where he had first landed on British soil, and whose inhabitants had welcomed him with such genial sympathy.[1]

But the splendours and the influence of the official metropolis were for long ages to be eclipsed, in the opinion of the English people, and of the Christian world, by another foundation, equally owing its origin to Augustin and Ethelbert, the first archbishop and the first Christian king of England. To the west of the royal city, and half-way to that church of St. Martin whither the queen went to pray, and where the king had been baptized, Augustin, always on the outlook for any traces which the old faith had left in Britain, discovered the site of a church which had been transformed into a pagan temple, and encircled with a sacred wood. Ethelbert gave up to him the temple, with all the ground surrounding it. The archbishop forthwith restored it to its original use as a church, and dedicated it to St. Pancras, a young Roman martyr, whose memory was dear to the Italian monks, because the monastery of Mount Cœlius, whence they had all come, and where their father Gregory was born, had been built upon lands formerly belonging to his family. Round this new sanctuary Augustin raised another monastery, of which Peter, one of his companions, was the first abbot, and which he intended to be the place of his own burial, after the Roman custom which placed the cemeteries out of the towns, and by the side of the highroads. He consecrated this new foundation in the names of the apostles of Rome, Peter and Paul; but it was under his own name that this famous abbey became

[1] GREGOR., *Epist.*, xi. 65. WILLELM. MALMESBURIENSIS, *De Gest. Reg.*, i. c. 4, and *De Doroberncnsibus Episcopis*, p. 111.

one of the most opulent and most revered sanctuaries of Christendom. It was for several centuries the burying-place of the kings and primates of England,[1] and at the same time the first and brightest centre of religious and intellectual life in the south of Great Britain.

Seven years were needed to complete the monastery, the church attached to which could not even be dedicated during the lifetime of him whose name it was to assume and preserve. But some months before his death, Augustin had the satisfaction of seeing the foundation of the first Benedictine monastery in England sanctioned by the solemn ratification of the king and the chiefs of the nation whom he had converted.

The charter of this monastery has been brought to light in our day as the oldest authentic record of the religious and political history of England.[2] Our readers will thank

[1] Ecclesiastical historians abound in testimonies of admiration for this immense house, whose patrimony extended to 11,860 acres of land, and whose façade was 250 feet long. Perhaps one could read on that façade these verses quoted by a chronicler, and which recall the inscription on the front of St. John Lateran at Rome :—

"Hoc caput Anglorum datur esse monasteriorum
Regum cunctorum fons pontificumque sacrorum."

The abbot of St. Augustin of Canterbury received from Pope Leo IX., in 1055, the privilege of sitting in the first place after the abbot of Mount Cassino, in the general councils. The *Monasticon Anglicanum* of Dugdale, vol. i. p. 23, gives a very curious view of the state of the ruins of this abbey, towards the middle of the seventeenth century ; a great tower, called Ethelbert's, but built much later than his time, can still be distinguished. In the *Vestiges of Antiquities at Canterbury*, by T. Hastings, 1813, folio, there are plates representing in great detail the remains, still considerable, but cruelly profaned and neglected, which existed in 1812—the best preserved portion used as a brewery, and beside it a tavern with an enclosure used for cock-fights. It has been restored recently, to a certain extent, thanks to the munificence of Mr. Beresford Hope, and is used at present as a seminary for the Anglican missions. The house has had several historians, among others William Thorne (*de Spina*), who was abbot about 1358, and chiefly Thomas de Elmham, treasurer of the monastery in 1407, whose chronicle was edited by Mr. Hardwick in 1858, for the collection of *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores.*

[2] The authenticity of this deed has been admitted by one of the most

us for quoting the text and the signatures of the witnesses. The Anglo-Saxon king appears in this transaction at once as a Christian prince and as the chief of the aristocratic assembly whose consent was necessary to the validity of all his deeds.[1] He begins thus:—

"I, Ethelbert, king of Kent, with the consent of the venerable archbishop Augustin, and of my nobles, give and concede to God, in honour of St. Peter, a certain portion of the land which is mine by right, and which lies to the east of the town of Canterbury, to the end that a monastery may be built thereon, and that the properties hereinafter named may be in full possession of him who shall be appointed abbot thereof. Wherefore I swear and ordain, in the name of Almighty God, who is the just and sovereign judge, that the land thus given is given for ever —that it shall not be lawful either for me or for my successors to take any part of it whatsoever from its possessors; and if any one attempt to lessen or to annul our gift, that he be in this life deprived of the holy communion of the body and blood of Christ, and at the day of judgment cut off from the company of the saints.

"† I, Ethelbert, king of the English, have confirmed this gift, by my own hand, with the sign of the holy cross.

"† I, Augustin, by the grace of God archbishop, have freely subscribed.

"† I, Eadbald, son of the king, have adhered.

"† I, Hamigisile, duke, have approved.

learned and competent critics of our day, Sir Francis Palgrave, *Rise and Progress of the British Commonwealth*, vol. ii. pp. 215–218. Kemble, again, in his *Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici*, vol. i. p. 2, has published it with the asterisk which marks documents suspected or false; but he nowhere enters into any justification of this sentence.

[1] "Convocato ibidem concilio communi, tam cleri quam populi, omnium et singulorum approbatione et consensu, monasterium . . . monachis hic perpetuo Deo servituris . . . cum dotatione, confirmatione ac perpetua libertate donavit."—ELMHAM, p. 111.

"† I, Hocca, earl, have consented.
"† I, Angemundus, referendary, have approved.
"† I, Graphio, earl, have said it is well.
"† I, Tangisile, *regis optimas*, have confirmed.
"† I, Pinca, have consented.
"† I, Geddi, have corroborated."[1]

[1] "Ego Ethelbertus, rex Cantiæ, cum consensu venerabilis archiepiscopi Augustini," &c.—KEMBLE, *loc. cit.* The deeds of gift executed by the Anglo-Saxon kings always announce the consent *ducum, comitum, optimatumque*, and are always signed by the counts and principal lords, or by the bishops and abbots; the formula *Favi*, or *consensi*, or *approbavi*, often accompanies the proper name, which is always preceded by a cross, †. This cross did not occupy the place of the signature, as has been represented, nor did it at all indicate that the subscriber could not write. Kemble, in a note to his preface, p. 91, seems to indicate that the two signatures of Angemundus and Graphio, with the accompanying qualifications, warrant him in ranking the whole deed in the list of apocryphal documents. Palgrave gives, after Somner's *Canterbury*, p. 47, another text with the same title, where the signatures, arranged in the same order, are not accompanied with any qualification. He proves elsewhere, p. 214, that the most disputed of the Anglo-Saxon documents have almost always some authentic deeds as their basis, the original authenticity of which ought not to be called in question on account of real or apparent anachronisms resulting from subsequent amplifications or alterations. Almost all the Anglo-Saxon deeds that we can still read are strongly confirmed, according to him, by what he calls their internal evidence. These charters rest on history, which in its turn rests on them; each thus confirming the other.

CHAPTER II

HOW POPE GREGORY AND BISHOP AUGUSTIN GOVERNED THE NEW CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Joy of Gregory on learning the success of the monks.—His letters to Augustin; to the patriarch of Alexandria; to Queen Bertha.—A new monastic colony sent out.—Letter to the king.—Advice to Augustin regarding his miracles.—Opinion of Burke.—Answer of Gregory to the questions of Augustin.—The Pope's arrangements for the heathen; his admirable moderation.—Supremacy over the British bishops accorded to Augustin.—Opposition of the Welsh Celts.—Nature of the dissensions which separated the British from the Roman Church.—Celebration of Easter.—Origin and insignificance of the religious dispute.—It is increased and complicated by patriotic antipathy to the Saxons.—First conference between Augustin and the British.—Miracle of the blind man.—Second conference; rupture.—The abbot of Bangor.—Augustin's threatening prediction concerning the monks of Bangor fulfilled by the fierce Ethelfrid of Northumbria.—Sequel of Augustin's mission.—He is insulted by the fishermen of Dorsetshire.—Foundation of King Ethelbert.—Bishops of London and of Rochester.—Laws of Ethelbert; the first reduced to writing.—Guarantee given to the Church property.—Death of Gregory and Augustin.

Some time before this solemn national consecration of his work, and after the first year of his mission, Augustin had sent to Rome two of his companions—Lawrence, who was to succeed him as archbishop, and Peter, who was to be the first abbot of the new monastery of St. Peter and St. Paul—to announce to the Pope the great and good news of the conversion of the king, with his kingdom of Kent; next, to demand from him new assistants in the work, the harvest being great and the labourers but few; and, lastly, to consult him on eleven important and delicate points touching the discipline and the management of the new Church.

The joy of Gregory when, in the midst of the perils and trials of the Church, and of his own sufferings, material and moral, he saw the realisation of his soul's most cherished dream, may be understood. The boldest of his projects was crowned with success. A new people had been brought into the fold of the Church through his gentle but persevering activity. Till the end of the world, innumerable souls would owe to him their admission to the great brotherhood of souls here below—to the eternal joys that are above. He could not foresee the great men, the famous saints, the immense resources, the dauntless champions, that England was to furnish to the Catholic Church; but neither had he the sorrow of foreknowing the sad revolt which was yet to rob so much glory of its lustre, nor that base ingratitude which has dared to despise or to underrate, in his case as in that of his subordinates, the incomparable blessings which he conferred on the people of England by sending to them the light of the Gospel.

The joy of Gregory, as pure as it was natural, infused its spirit into that vast correspondence in which he has left us so faithful an image of his mind and of his life. To Augustin, as might have been expected, its first overflow was directed. "Glory be to God in the highest," he writes —"glory to that God who would not reign alone in heaven, whose death is our life, whose weakness is our strength, whose suffering cures our sufferings, whose love sends us to seek even in the island of Britain for brothers whom we knew not, whose goodness causes us to find those whom we sought for while yet we knew them not![1] Who can express the exultation of all faithful hearts, now that the English nation, through the grace of God and thy brotherly labour, is illumined by the Divine light, and tramples under foot the idols which it ignorantly worshipped, in order that it

[1] "Ne solus regnaret in cœlo, cujus morte vivimus, cujus infirmitate roboramur, cujus passione a passione eripimur, cujus amore in Britannia fratres quærimus quos ignorabamus."—*Epist.*, xi. 28.

may now bow down before the true God?" He then hastened to re-echo into the East the happy news which had reached him from the extreme West. He writes to the patriarch of Alexandria: "The bearer of your letters found me sick and leaves me sick. But God grants to me gladness of heart to temper the bitterness of my bodily sufferings.[1] The flock of the holy Church grows and multiplies; the spiritual harvests gather in the heavenly garners. . . . You announced to me the conversion of your heretics—the concord of your faithful people. . . . I make you a return in kind, because I know you will rejoice in my joy, and that you have aided me with your prayers. Know, then, that the nation of the Angles, situated at the extremest *angle* of the world,[2] had till now continued in idolatry, worshipping stocks and stones. God inspired me to send thither a monk of my monastery here, to preach the gospel to them. This monk, whom I caused to be ordained bishop by the Frankish bishops, has penetrated to this nation at the uttermost ends of the earth; and I have now received tidings of the happy success of his enterprise. He and his companions have wrought miracles that seem to come near to those of the apostles themselves, and more than 10,000 English have been baptized by them at one time."

After having thus quickened the zeal of the Egyptian patriarch by these tidings from England, he turns to the queen of the newly converted nation — Bertha, born a Christian, and the grand-daughter of a saint—to congratulate her on the conversion to her own faith of her husband and her people, and to encourage her to new efforts by telling her that she was remembered in the prayers of the faithful, not only at Rome, but at Con-

[1] "Ægrum me reperit, ægrum reliquit . . . quatenus mentis lætitia immanitatem meæ molestiæ temperaret."—*Epist.*, viii. 30, ad Eulogium.

[2] "Gens *Anglorum*, in mundi *angulo* posita suo."—*Epist.*, viii. 30, ad Eulogium. Always this singular taste for puns!

stantinople, and that the fame of her good works had reached the ears of the most serene Emperor himself. "Our very dear sons, Lawrence the priest and Peter the monk," he writes to her, "have rehearsed to me, on their arrival here, all that your Majesty has done for our reverend brother and co-bishop Augustin—all the comfort and the charity that you have so liberally bestowed on him. We bless the Almighty, who has seen meet to reserve for you the conversion of the English nation. Even as He found in the glorious Helena, mother of the most pious Constantine, an instrument to win over the hearts of the Romans to the Christian faith, so we feel assured will His mercy, through your agency, work out the salvation of the English. Already, for a long time, it must have been your endeavour to turn, with the prudence of a true Christian, the heart of your husband towards the faith which you profess, for his own wellbeing and for that of his kingdom. Well-instructed and pious as you are, this duty should not have been to you either tedious or difficult. If you have in any wise neglected it, you must redeem the lost time. Strengthen in the mind of your noble husband his devotion to the Christian faith; pour into his heart the love of God; inflame him with zeal for the complete conversion of his subjects, so that he may make an offering to Almighty God by your love and your devotion. I pray God that the completion of your work may make the angels in heaven feel the same joy which I already owe to you on earth."[1]

About the same time, in revising his commentaries on the Scriptures, and his Exposition of the Book of Job, he

[1] "Qualis erga R. fratrem . . . gloria vestra exstiterit, quantaque illi solatia vel qualem charitatem impenderit, retulerunt. . . . Postquam et recta fide gloria vestra munita et litteris docta est, hoc vobis nec tardum nec debuit esse difficile."—*Epist.*, v. 29. It will be observed that this letter is placed in the catalogue of the pontifical correspondence apart from the other letters which Gregory addressed to the husband of Bertha, as well as to the princes and bishops, in order to recommend to them the new assistants of Augustin.

cannot help adding then this cry of triumph: "Look at that Britain whose tongue has uttered only savage sounds, but now echoes the Hallelujah of the Hebrews! Behold that furious sea—it gently smoothes itself beneath the feet of the saints! These savage clans, that the princes of the earth could not subdue by the sword—see them enchained by the simple word of the priests! That people which, while yet pagan, defied undauntedly the arms and the renown of our soldiers, trembles at the speech of the humble and weak. It knows fear now, but it is the fear of sin; and all its desires are centred on the glory everlasting."[1]

Far, however, from resting indolently in this joy, he remained to his latest day faithful to the warm and active interest with which his beloved England had inspired him.[2] He sent to Augustin a new monastic colony, provided with relics, sacred vessels, priestly robes, the ornaments of the altar, and all that was necessary to give effect to the pomp of religious service. He sent also books, which were intended to form the nucleus of an ecclesiastical library.[3]

At the head of this new swarm of monks was a man of

[1] "Ecce lingua Britanniæ quæ nil aliud noverat quam barbarum frendere, jamdudum in divinis laudibus Hebræum cœpit alleluia sonare. Ecce tumidus quondam, jam substratus pedibus sanctorum, servit Oceanus. . . . Qui catervas pugnantium infidelis nequaquam metuerat, jam nunc fidelis humilium linguam timet . . . ut prave agere metuat ac totis desideriis ad æternitatis gloriam pervenire concupiscat."—S. GREG., *Moral.*, book xxviii. c. 11.

[2] "Semper pro amatis Anglis vigilantissimus."—GOTSELINUS, *Hist. Maior*, c. 34.

[3] "Nec non et codices plurimos."—BEDE, i. 29. Many of the books sent to Augustin by the hands of the abbot Peter were carefully preserved, and escaped the ravages of time for six centuries. In the days of Henry VIII. Leland still speaks of them with admiration: "Majusculis literis Romanis more veterum scriptis . . . incredibilem præ se ferentes antiquitatis majestatem." An old catalogue of the first consignment of books ends with these words: "This is the origin of the library of the whole English Church."—A.D. 601. In the library of the college of Corpus Christi, at Cambridge, a Latin MS. of the four evangelists is preserved, which, according to an old tradition, is the copy brought from Rome by St. Augustin in 596.

noble birth, by name Mellitus, and his companion Justus, who were to succeed each other on the metropolitan throne of Canterbury, and with them Paulinus, the future apostle of Northumbria. The Pope provided them with very urgent letters, all of the same date, for Queen Brunehaut, for her grandsons, kings Theodebert and Theodoric; for their rival king Clotaire of Neustria,[1] who had treated Augustin with great kindness, and heartily seconded his enterprise; and for the bishops of Arles, Lyons, Gap, Toulon, Marseilles, Châlons, Paris, Rouen, and Angers—thus marking beforehand the possible halting-places of the new missionaries.[2]

In a special letter to Virgilius, the legate at Arles, he recommends him most particularly to receive their common brother, Augustin, with the greatest affection, in the event of his visiting him; and he adds: "As it often happens that those who are at a distance need to be made aware of disorders which require to be repressed, if he should inform you of faults on the part of his priests or others, examine everything along with him with the minutest care, and act with the greatest strictness, but ever be heedful that you do not let the innocent suffer with the guilty." [3]

The passionate yet intelligent and impartial tenderness towards his friends, which is one of the most attractive features in Gregory's admirable character, is nowhere more beautifully displayed than in his relations with Augustin. We see him ever engaged in extending and consolidating the authority of his envoy; but not the less anxious for the welfare of his soul, and resolute to give precedence before all else to the interests of the newly Christianised country. He entrusted to the new missionaries a long letter addressed to king Ethelbert, in which, while congratulating him on

[1] *Epist.*, xi. 61, ad Clotarium Francorum regem.

[2] *Ibid.*, xi. 54–62. Compare BEDE, i. 29.

[3] "Si communem fratrem Augustinum episcopum ad vos venire contigerit, ita illum dilectio vestra, sicut decet, affectuose dulciterque suscipiat, ut et ipsum consolationis suæ bono refoveat, et alios, qualiter fraterna charitas colenda sit, doceat."—*Epist.*, xi. 68.

his conversion, and comparing him to Constantine, as he had compared Bertha to St. Helena, he exhorted him to spread the faith among his subjects—to forbid the worship of idols, to overthrow their temples, and to establish good morals by exhortations, kindnesses, and threats, but above all by his own example. He adds: "You have with you our very reverend brother, Bishop Augustin, trained according to the monastic rule, full of the knowledge of the Scriptures, abounding in good works in the sight of God. Hearken devoutly to him, and faithfully accomplish all that he tells you; for the more you listen to what he will tell you on the part of God, the more will God grant his prayers when he prays to Him on your behalf. Attach yourself, then, to him with all the strength of your mind, and all the fervour of faith; and second his efforts with all the force that God has given you."[1]

The same day, in a public letter, he confers on Augustin the right of bearing the *pallium* in celebrating mass, as a reward for having established the new English Church. This honour was to descend to all his successors on the archiepiscopal throne.[2] He constitutes him metropolitan of twelve bishoprics, which he enjoins him to erect in southern England. He gives him authority to appoint whom he will metropolitan bishop in the ancient Roman and episcopal city of York, subordinating to the see of York twelve new bishoprics yet to be erected, but reserving to Augustin during his lifetime the supremacy over the northern metropolitan. Over and above all the bishops to be ordained

[1] "Fanorum ædificia everte, subditorum mores ex magna vitæ munditia, exhortando, terrendo, blandiendo, corrigendo et boni operis exempla monstrando, ædifica. . . . Augustinus episcopus, in monasterii regula edoctus." —*Epist.*, xi. 66. It is surprising to find in this beautiful letter a paragraph warning the Saxon king that the end of the world is at hand—that he must watch for it day by day, and not be astonished, seeing that it is near, at marvellous things which are about to happen in England, as elsewhere.

[2] Since the schism of Henry VIII., the Anglican archbishops of Canterbury, by the strangest of anomalies, have still preserved this *pallium* in the arms of their see.

by him or by the future bishop of York in the conquered territory, Gregory places under the jurisdiction of Augustin all the bishops of Britain, "in order," says the Pope, "that they may learn by your word and by your life how they must believe, and how they must live, in order to fulfil their office and gain an inheritance in heaven."[1] He here treats of the bishops who were established in Wales, or who had fled thither for refuge—the prelates and teachers of the Christian Celtic populations which had escaped the Saxon yoke.

But while he thus openly evidenced the fulness of his confidence and the authority with which he invested Augustin, he addressed to him, in secret, advices meant to preserve him from the dangerous snare of pride. "In our joy," he wrote, "there is much to fear. I know, beloved brother, that God has by thee wrought great miracles in this nation. It is right to rejoice that the minds of the English are drawn by visible miracles to the invisible grace; but we ought to fear lest these prodigies incline the weak mind to presumption, and make the inner man fall to a worse depth through vainglory than he is raised up outwardly. When the disciples said to their divine Master, 'Lord, in Thy name even the devils are subject unto us,' He answered them, 'Rejoice not because the devils are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' The names of all the elect are written there, and yet all the elect work not miracles. And while God thus acts outwardly by thee, thou oughtest, brother beloved, to judge thyself scrupulously within, and to know well what thou art. If thou rememberest that thou hast offended God by word or deed, have thy faults ever present to thy memory to repress the vainglory which may rise in thy heart. Reflect that this gift of miracles is not given to thee for thyself,

[1] "Quatenus ex lingua et vita tuæ sanctitatis, et recte credendi et bene vivendi formam percipiant, atque officium fide ac moribus exsequentes, ad cœlestia, cum Dominus voluerit, regna pertingant."—*Epist.*, xi. 65.

but for those whose salvation is committed to thee. The reprobate have wrought miracles; and we, we know not even if we are among the elect. It is needful, then, sternly to humble and subdue the mind in the midst of all these prodigies and signs, lest it should seek in them only its own glory and its private advantage. God has given us but one sign whereby we may know His elect; it is this, that we have love one to another."[1]

Immediately after, to reassure the friend whom he had thus corrected, by a return to his wonted tenderness and sympathy, he continues in these terms: "I speak thus because I desire to subdue to humility the soul of my dear hearer. But let even thy humility have confidence. All sinful as I am, I have a sure hope that all thy sins will be remitted unto thee, inasmuch as thou hast been chosen to bring to others the remission of their sins. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance, what joy must not there be over a great nation which, in coming to the true faith, repents of all the evil it has done! And it is thou who hast given this joy to heaven."[2]

In one of Gregory's former letters, addressed, not to Augustin, but to his friend Eulogius, patriarch of Alexandria, the Pope also refers to the miracles which had signalised the mission of Augustin; he does not hesitate even to compare them to the signs and wonders which accompanied the preaching of the apostles.[3] Twelve centuries after Gregory, the greatest genius that modern England has pro-

[1] Fleury, in quoting this letter, says with justice, "Nothing proves more completely the truth of St. Augustin's miracles than these serious counsels of Gregory."

[2] "Hæc autem dico quia auditoris mei animum in humilitate sternere cupio. Sed ipsa tua humilitas habeat fiduciam suam. Nam peccator ego spem certissimam teno."—*Epist.*, xi. 28.

[3] "Tantis miraculis vel ipse vel hi qui cum ipso transmissi sunt in gente eadem coruscant, ut apostolorum virtutes in signis, quæ perhibent, imitari videantur."—*Ibid.*, viii. 30.

duced, the immortal Burke, bows respectfully before that tradition, misunderstood by his frivolous contemporaries. The introduction of Christianity into any country whatsoever is, according to him, the most inestimable benefit that can be conferred on humanity. Why, then, in view of an end so worthy, should not Providence itself sometimes directly interpose? Miracles, of old time accepted with a blind credulity, have been since rejected with "as undistinguishing a disregard." "But," adds the great orator, "it is the reality or opinion of such miracles that was the principal cause of the early acceptance and rapid progress of Christianity in this island."[1] It is singular that neither Bede nor any other historian gives the least detail of these wonders which awoke at once the admiration, the gratitude, and the prudent deprecations of St. Gregory the Great. But of all possible miracles, the greatest is assuredly "to have detached from paganism without violence a violent people; to have introduced it into the Christian commonwealth, not man by man, and family by family, but at one stroke, with its kings, its warlike nobility, and all its institutions."[2] This king, who believes himself descended from the gods of the Scandinavian paradise, yet who resigns his capital to the priests of the crucified God; this people, fierce and idolatrous, which by thousands prostrates itself at the feet of a few foreign monks, and by thousands plunges into the icy waters of the Thames, in mid winter, to receive baptism from these unknown strangers; this rapid and complete transformation of a proud and victorious, and at the same time sensual and rapacious race, by means of a doctrine pre-eminently fitted to quell lust, pride, and sensuality, and which, once received into these savage hearts, rests for ever implanted there,—is not this, of all miracles, the most marvellous, as it is the most indisputable?

Finally, after all these letters, Gregory wrote a very long

[1] BURKE, *Essay towards an Abridgment of English History*, book ii. ch. 1.

[2] OZANAM, p. 159.

and very detailed answer to the eleven questions which Augustin had put to him, as to the principal difficulties which he had encountered, or which he foresaw might still be met with in the course of his mission. To convey a just idea of this reply, which is an admirable monument of enlightenment, of conciliatory reason, of gentleness, wisdom, moderation, and prudence, and which was destined to become, as has been most justly said, the rule and the code of Christian missions,[1] it would have to be quoted entire; but besides its extreme length, it embraces certain details from which our modern prudery recoils. Here, however, is the substance of its most important passages.

The Pope, consulted as to the use and the division to be made of the offerings of the faithful, reminds Augustin that the revenues of the Church should be divided into four portions: the first for the bishop and his family, because of the hospitality which he ought to exercise; the second for the clergy; the third for the poor; the fourth for the maintenance and repair of churches. "But you," he says to the archbishop—"you who have been brought up in monastic discipline, ought not to live apart from your clergy, but to initiate in the new English Church the life in common which our fathers practised in the primitive Church."[2]

Why, asked Augustin, are there divers customs in the Church, when the faith is one? and why does the liturgy according to which the mass is celebrated in the churches of Gaul (which Bertha probably followed in her oratory of St. Martin), differ from that of the Roman Church?

"You, my brother," replies the Pope, "know the usage of the Roman Church, in which you cannot forget that you were brought up. But if it should happen that you find

[1] OZANAM, *Civilisation Chrétienne chez les Francs*, p. 154.

[2] "Interrogatio beati Augustini episcopi Cantuariorum Ecclesiæ. . . . Respondit Gregorius papa urbis Romæ, . . . Tua fraternitas monasterii, regulis erudita, seorsum vivere non debet a clericis suis."—BEDE, i. 27, GREG., *Epist.*, xi. 64.

in the Church of Rome, or in that of Gaul, or in any other, some usage which you believe to be more pleasing to God, I enjoin you to select it with care, and give it a place in the new Church of England. For institutions are not to be loved because of the places whence they are derived; but rather are places to be beloved for the sake of the good institutions that exist therein. Choose therefore among the Churches all that is pious and reasonable, and out of what you thus collect form the use of the English Church." [1]

In these words it is easy to recognise the pontiff who had already braved the criticisms of some petty spirits, by introducing at Rome various usages that were believed to be borrowed from Constantinople, and who had said to his critics, "I shall be always ready to deter my subordinates from evil, but to imitate them in good, borrowing it from it matters not what Church. He is but a fool who could make his primacy a reason for disdaining to learn whatever good can be learnt." [2]

Consulting as to the punishment to be inflicted on sacrilegious robbers, and as to the administration of the Roman law, which imposed on the robber a double or fourfold restitution, Gregory advises that, in the punishment, the poverty or the riches of the depredator be taken into account; and that it be administered always with a fatherly love and a moderation which shall keep the mind within the

[1] "Novit fraternitas tua Romanæ Ecclesiæ consuetudinem in qua se meminit eruditam. Sed mihi placet, sive in Romana, sive Galliarum, seu in qualibet Ecclesia, aliquid invenisti quod plus omnipotenti Deo possit placere, sollicite eligas, et in Anglorum Ecclesiæ quæ adhuc ad fidem nova est, institutione præcipua, quæ de multis Ecclesiis colligere potuisti, infundas. Non enim pro locis res, sed pro bonis rebus loci amandi sunt. Ex singulis ergo quibusque Ecclesiis quæ pia, quæ religiosa, quæ recta sunt, elige: et hæc quasi in fasciculum collecta, apud Anglorum mentes in consuetudinem depone."

[2] "Si quid boni vel ipsa vel altera Ecclesia habet, ego et minores meos quos ab illicitis prohibeo in bono imitari paratus sum. Stultus est enim qui in eo se primum existimat, ut bona quæ viderit discere contemnat." —*Epist.*, x. 12, ad Joann., Syracus. Episc.

limits of reason. As to restitution—"God forbid," said he, "that the Church should seek to gain by what she has lost, and to draw a profit from the folly of men."[1]

Augustin had further inquired what rule he should follow in regard to marriages within the forbidden degrees, to the duties of the married state, and how much ought to be retained of the purifications prescribed to women by the Mosaic law. Gregory, in reply, interdicts absolutely marriages between mothers-in-law and sons-in-law, which were common among the Saxons; as also between brothers and sisters-in-law. But, for the latter case, he does not require that converts, who had contracted such marriages before their conversion, should be deprived of the holy communion, "lest," he says, "you should appear to punish them for what they have done in mere ignorance; for there are things which the Church corrects with strictness, and there are others which, for kindness' sake, she tolerates, or prudently overlooks; but always in such wise as to restrain the evil which she bears with, or winks at." He would, in general, treat the English as St. Paul treated his converts—nourishing them not on solid food, but with milk, as newborn babes. Further on "he prescribes to the marriage bed these severe laws which secure health and vigour and the fruitfulness of the Christian family."[2] He does not permit that the woman who has just borne a child should be excluded from the Church, and that thus her suffering should be made a crime.

But he protests with energy against the unnatural custom of mothers who will not be nurses, and who disdain to suckle the children they have brought forth. He sought thus to impress upon the heart of the Saxon woman all a wife's duties, while at the same time he marked her proper place

[1] "Ita ut mens extra rationis regulam omnino nihil faciat. . . . Absit ut Ecclesia cum augmento recipiat quod de terrenis rebus videtur amittere, et lucra de vanis quærere."

[2] OZANAM, *op. cit.*, 161.

in the Christian family by exalting her dignity and protecting her modesty.[1]

Reflection only served to confirm the Pope in this wise and generous indulgence towards the new converts, allied, as it was in him, with a zeal at once pure and ardent for the service and progress of the truth. Scarce had he addressed to Ethelbert the letter in which he exhorted him to destroy the temples of the ancient national worship, when he reconsidered the matter, and a few days later despatched entirely different instructions to Mellitus, the chief of the new mission, whom he had designated abbot, and to whom he had entrusted the letter for the king—hoping to overtake him on his journey. "Since your departure and that of your company," he writes, "I have been much disquieted, for I have learned nothing of the success of your journey. But when Almighty God shall have carried you in safety to our most reverend brother Augustin, say to him that, after having long revolved in my own mind the affairs of the English, I have come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to overthrow all the temples of the idols, but only the idols that are in them. After having sprinkled these temples with holy water, let altars and relics be placed in them; for if they are strongly built, it were well that they were made to pass from the worship of demons to the service of the true God—to the end that the people, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may the more readily accept the religious change and come to adore God in the places familiar to them. And as it is their custom to slay many oxen in sacrifices

[1] "In hoc enim tempore sancta Ecclesia quædam per fervorem corrigit, quædam per mansuetudinem tolerat, quædam per considerationem dissimulat, atque ita portat et dissimulat, ut sæpe malum quod adversatur portando et dissimulando compescat. . . . Si enixam mulierem prohibemus ecclesiam intrare, ipsam ei pœnam suam in culpam deputamus. . . . Prava autem in conjugatorum moribus consuetudo surrexit, ut mulieres . . . dum se continere nolunt, despiciunt lactare quos gignunt."—OZANAM, *op. cit.*, 161. Compare *Epist.* xiv. 17, ad Felicem Messanensem Episcopum.

to the demons, some solemnity which should take the place of this sacrifice must be established. On the day of the dedication, or on the feast of the martyrs whose relics may be given to them, they may be permitted to make huts of leaves around the temples thus changed into churches, and celebrate the feast with social repasts. But in place of sacrificing beasts to a demon, they will kill them only to be eaten with thankfulness to God who provides their food; and thus, by leaving to them some of the enjoyments of the senses, they will be more easily led to desire the joys of the soul. For it is impossible to change all at once the whole habits of the savage mind: a mountain is not climbed by leaps and bounds, but step by step."[1]

Among the enemies of the Roman Church, pedants and hypercritics are found to accuse St. Gregory of having compromised matters with his conscience in thus opening the entrance of the sanctuary to paganism. Far from sympathising with them, let us, on the contrary, learn to admire the great and wise teacher who could so well distinguish the essential from the accidental, and who, repudiating the pretensions of minute and vexatious uniformity, and sacrificing the pettiness of prejudice to the majesty of a great design, could thus develop the worship of the truth even among the superstitions of Germanic paganism. Let us admire, above all, "a religion which penetrates thus to the depths of human nature—which knows what needful combats against his passions it demands from man, and which has no desire to impose unnecessary sacrifices upon him. The only way of knowing human nature is to love it, and it can be won only at this price."[2]

[1] "Post discessum congregationis vestræ quæ tecum est, valde sumus suspensi redditi, quia nihil de prosperitate vestri itineris audisse nos contigit. . . . Dicite ei quid diu mecum de causa Anglorum cogitans tractavi. . . . Nam duris mentibus simul omnia abscidere impossibile esse non dubium est, quia et is qui summum locum ascendere nitetur, gradibus vel passibus, non saltibus elevatur."—*Epist.*, xi. 76.

[2] OZANAM, *Œuvres*, i. 167.

In his last question Augustin had asked how he—as yet the only bishop among the English—should deal by the bishops of Gaul and Britain. Gregory admonishes him not to keep at a distance the bishops of Gaul who might wish to be present at his ordinations of new bishops in England, "for to conduct successfully spiritual affairs it is lawful to draw lessons from temporal affairs; and as, in the world, persons already married are invited together to take part in the festivities of a wedding, so nothing forbids the participation of bishops already ordained in that ordination which is the espousal of man with God." The Pope added: "We do not assign to you any authority over the bishops of Gaul, and you can reform them only through persuasion and good example, except at the risk of thrusting your sickle into another's harvest. As to the British bishops, we commit them entirely to your care, that you may instruct the ignorant, strengthen the feeble, and correct the evil." [1]

Gregory, who knew so well how to read the hearts and win the minds of men, could have only a very imperfect knowledge of the geography as well as of the political condition of Great Britain. He seems to have held on that subject the antiquated notions which prevailed at Rome regarding an island which had been the first to escape from the imperial yoke. He evidently had no idea of the national and only too legitimate antipathy which inflamed the Christian Britons against the heathen Saxons, who had for a century and a half overrun, ravaged, and usurped their country. He imagined that those Christians, always faithfully united to the Roman Church, who had so energetically repudiated Pelagianism, and whose bishops had sat in the ancient councils presided over by the legates of Rome, would lend a cordial support to the mission of the Roman monks, commissioned by him to evangelise the

[1] "Nam in ipsis rebus spiritualibus ut sapienter et mature disponantur, exemplum trahere a rebus etiam carnalibus possumus. . . . Britannorum omnes episcopos tuæ fraternitati committimus."—*Epist.*, xi. 64.

Saxons. He did not know the implacable hate of the conquered for the conquerors; and he forgot certain points of difference which, though they did not touch the great verities of the Christian faith, and were completely removed from all idea of a national or schismatic Church, raised, nevertheless, a formidable barrier between the British clergy and his Roman missionaries.

It is evident that Augustin always showed himself capable of understanding and applying the precepts of his friend and master. No incident of his life, recorded in his history, indicates any opposition to, or departure from, the rules laid down for him by the prudence and charity of Gregory. He was faithful to these rules in his relations with the British bishops placed by the Pope under his jurisdiction, as well as in all other respects. A rapid survey of this conflict will even lead the reader to protest against the unjust and calumnious accusations, of which it has been the object, and will prove that Augustin was exclusively guided by a natural desire to put an end to dissensions which impaired the unity of the efforts necessary for the conversion of the Saxons.

Wherein, then, consisted those differences between Rome and the Celtic Christianity of Wales, of Ireland, and of Caledonia, which occupy so prominent a place in the religious history of the sixth and seventh centuries, and which the irritable and haughty zeal of St. Columbanus carried over into France, and with which he tried the patience of St. Gregory;[1] while Augustin, on his side, found in them the chief stumblingblock to his mission in Great Britain? It cannot be too often repeated, that they affected none of the essential doctrines of Christianity, no article of faith defined by the Church either before or since that period, no question of morals, and above all, that they did not offer any opposition to the supremacy of the Holy See, as it was then exercised or accepted by the rest of the Christian world.

[1] See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 256.

Modern research has finally dispersed all the imaginary chimeras of certain English and German writers who attributed these differences to a pretended influence of Eastern Christianity on the British Churches, of which no authentic trace exists; or more readily still, to a traditional repugnance on the part of the Celtic population to the yoke of Rome—a repugnance belied by the history of the past, as well as by the living testimony of the races, the most tenacious and most illustrious members of which, the Irish and the Armoricans, have purchased, at the cost of the most generous and cruel sacrifices, the right of placing themselves in the foremost rank of the faithful children of the Church of Rome.[1]

The principal difference turned on the question of the date of the festival of Easter. This nice question—the bugbear of all who embark on the study of the primitive annals of the Church—has already emerged in the course of our history, and will often again recur.[2]

From the earliest Christian ages prolonged discussions were raised regarding the day on which the greatest festival of the Church should be celebrated. The Council of Nice fixed the date of the Paschal solemnities for the Sunday after the full moon of the vernal equinox, and that date, sanctioned by the Roman Church, had been received along with the Christian faith by all the Churches of Britain, and had been carried by St. Patrick to Ireland, and by St. Columba to Caledonia. But the Church of Alexandria, having discovered an astronomical error, originating in the employment of the ancient Jewish computation by the Christians,

[1] The most weighty writers of Protestant Germany in our day, such as Gieseler, have already abandoned this hypothesis, so long accepted by their co-religionists. It has been learnedly refuted by the illustrious Professor Döllinger in his *Manual of Ecclesiastical History*, and it may be said annihilated by the two Memoirs of M. Varin on the *Causes of the Dissension between the British and the Roman Church*, published by the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, 1858. A digest of the conclusions of these two Memoirs will be found in Appendix II.

[2] See *ante*, vol. ii. book vii.

had introduced a more exact calculation, which was adopted by all the Eastern Churches; and the result was, that from the pontificate of St. Leo the Great (440–61) a difference of an entire month had arisen between Easter day at Rome and Easter day at Alexandria. Towards the middle of the sixth century, the difference ceased to exist; Rome adopted the calculation of Denys le Petit, which demonstrated clearly the error of the day fixed by the Council of Nice, and from this date uniformity was re-established in the Church. But the Saxon invasion had interrupted the ordinary intercourse between Rome and the British Churches; they retained the ancient Roman usage, and it was precisely their attachment to that usage which was their argument against the more exact computation which Augustin and the Italian monks brought with them, but which the British rejected as suspicious novelties, to receive which would be an insult to the traditions of their fathers.[1] It was thus from their very fidelity to the early teachings of Rome that they resisted the new Roman missionaries.

This cause of dissension, by far the most important, was of a very recent date, and all the disputes that can be made out on other points (except that regarding the form of the tonsure) were equally new, without being at all more essential. If it had been otherwise—had there been the slightest difference touching doctrine or morals between the British and the Roman Church—Augustin would never have been guilty of the folly of soliciting the aid of the Celtic clergy in the conversion of the heathen Saxons. This would have been but to sow the seeds of confusion and discord in the new Church, which it was his business to organise by means of the energetic co-operation of the native Christians and the envoys of Rome.[2]

There is nothing more painful than to meet in history with endless and passionate contentions upon questions and

[1] WALTER, *Alte Wales*, p. 225. DOLLINGER, *op. cit.*, i. 2nd part, 216.
[2] DÖLLINGER, p. 217. REES, *Welsh Saints*, p. 288.

causes which, after some time has passed, are interesting or even intelligible to no human creature. But it is not Christian antiquity alone that offers us such a spectacle: we find it in all ages. And to those who profess to be scandalised at the overweening importance that the most pious minds of their time have attached to equal trifles, it should be enough to recall the determined obstinacy which prompted great nations, such as the English and the Russians, to resist the reform of the Gregorian calendar—the one for nearly two centuries, the other amidst the complete uniformity of the entire civilised world.

It is no less true that, by that obstinate fidelity to a venerable, though false, computation, the British set themselves at variance on this question of Easter, not only with Rome and the whole West, but also with the East, which celebrated that festival, like the Jews, on the precise day of the week on which it fell, while the British, in common with the whole Western Church, always held the celebration on Sunday. But this Sunday was, or might be, another day than that kept as Easter day at Rome.

Who could imagine that this pitiful and absurd difference should have kept the two Churches for two centuries on a footing of direct hostility? Since the British Celts received their ancient custom from Rome itself, why could they not follow Rome in her perfected reckoning as all the rest of the West did? Why should they have positively decided to hold festival while the Romans fasted; and to fast while at Rome they chanted the Hallelujah?

Was there not a more serious, a deeper cause for this dissension, of which the Paschal controversy was but the outward aspect? It is impossible to doubt it; and of all causes it was the most natural and excusable—the instinct of national preservation, exasperated by hatred of the triumphant enemy, and expressing itself in distrust of the stranger, who seemed to be an accomplice of that enemy.

Augustin knew well that he needed the aid of the Celtic

Christians in order to carry on successfully the great work which the Papacy had entrusted to him. Trained in the conciliatory and moderate school of St. Gregory the Great, fresh from his recent instructions, he was very far from being exclusive in regard to local personages or customs; and in order to effect the conversion of the Saxons, he claimed in all good faith the co-operation of the numerous and powerful clergy who, for more than a century, had been the very soul of the resistance to the heathen, and who peopled those great cloisters of Wales, into which the sword of the invader had never penetrated.

But the British resisted him with a jealous and obstinate opposition. They would not join him in evangelising their enemies; they had no wish to open to them the gates of heaven.[1]

Augustin, however, succeeded in obtaining the consent of the principal bishops and doctors of Wales to a conference with him. It was arranged that they should meet on the confines of Wessex, near the banks of the Severn, which separated the Saxons from the Britons. The interview, like that of Augustin with Ethelbert, after his landing in Kent, took place in the open air, and under an oak, which for a long time afterwards was known as Augustin's oak. He began, not by claiming the personal supremacy which the Pope had conceded to him, but by exhorting his hearers to live in Catholic peace with him, and to unite their efforts to his for the evangelisation of the pagans—that is to say, the Saxons. But neither his entreaties, nor his exhortations, nor his reproaches, nor the eloquence of his attendant monks joined to his own, availed to bend the Britons, who persisted in appealing to their own traditions in opposition to the new rules. After a long and laborious disputation, Augustin at last said, "Let us pray God, who maketh brethren to dwell together in unity, to show us by a sign from heaven what traditions we ought to follow. Let a sick man be brought hither, and he whose prayers

[1] VARIN, Memoir cited.

shall cure him shall be the one whose faith is to be followed." The British consented reluctantly. An Anglo-Saxon blind man was brought, whom the British bishops could not cure. Then Augustin fell on his knees, and implored God to enlighten the conscience of many of the faithful, by giving sight to this man. Immediately the blind man recovered his vision. The British were touched: [1] they acknowledged that Augustin's course was just and straightforward, but that they could not renounce their old customs without the consent of their people, and demanded a second assembly, in which their deputies should be more numerous.

The second conference was held soon after. Augustin there found himself in the presence of seven British bishops and of the most learned doctors of the great Monastery of Bangor, which contained more than 3000 monks, and which was, as we have seen, the centre of religious life in Wales. Before this new meeting, the Britons went to consult an anchorite, much famed among them for his wisdom and his sanctity, and asked him if they ought to give heed to Augustin, and abandon their traditions. "Yes," said the hermit, "if he is a man of God." "But how shall we know that?" "If he is meek and lowly of heart, as says the Gospel, it is probable that he carries the yoke of Jesus Christ, and that it is His yoke he offers you; but if he is hard and proud, he comes not from God, and you ought to give no heed to his discourse. In order to prove him, let him arrive the first at the place of council; and if he arises when you approach, you will know that he is a servant of Christ, and you will obey him; but if he rises not to do you honour, then despise him, as he will have despised you." [2]

[1] "Ut pace catholica secum habita, communem evangelizandi gentibus pro domino laborem susciperent. . . . Laboriosi atque longi certaminis finem fecit. . . . Quidam de genere Anglorum, oculorum usu privatus. . . . Confitentur intellexisse se veram esse viam justitiæ quam prædiaret Augustinus."—BEDE, ii. 2.

[2] "Sin autem vos spreverit, nec coram vobis adsurgere voluerit, cum sitis plures, et ipse spernatur a vobis."—*Ibid.*

The instructions of the anchorite were obeyed. Unfortunately, on arriving at the place of council they found Augustin already seated, *more Romano*, says an historian, and he did not rise to receive them.[1] This was enough to set them against him. "If this man," said they, "deigns not to rise at our arrival now, how will he slight us when we shall have acknowledged his authority!" From that hour they became intractable, and studied to thwart him at every point. Neither then nor at the first conference did the archbishop make any effort to induce them to acknowledge his personal authority. Let it be added, to the honour of this headstrong race, and rebellious but earnest and generous clergy, that Augustin did not reproach them with any of those infringements of the purity of the priestly life which some authors have imputed to them.[2] With moderation, in scrupulous conformity to the instructions of the Pope, he reduced all his claims to three main points. "You have," said he, "many practices which are contrary to our usage, which is that of the universal Church; we will admit them all without difficulty, if only you will believe me on three points: to celebrate Easter at the right time; to complete the sacrament of baptism[3] according to the usage of the holy Roman Church; and to preach the word of God along with us to the English nation." To this threefold demand the Celtic bishops and monks offered a threefold refusal, and added that they would never acknowledge him as archbishop.[4] In thus refusing to recognise

[1] "Cum ergo convenissent, et Augustinus *Romano more* in sella residens iis non assurrexisset."—HENR. HUNTINGDON, iii. 186, ed. Savile.

[2] "Errorem Bretonum . . . quo alia plura ecclesiasticæ castitati et paci contraria gerunt."—BEDE. v. 18. Compare GILDAS, *De Excidio*, p. 23. Döllinger believes that he refers here to the *subintroductæ*, so often denounced by the councils. He notices elsewhere that the British priests alone have been the object of these accusations, which have never been brought against the other branches of the Celtic Church.

[3] He referred probably to Confirmation.

[4] "Quia in multis quidem nostræ consuetudini, immo universalis Ecclesiæ contrariæ geritis; et tamen si in tribus his mihi obtemperare vultis; ut

the personal supremacy of Augustin, they in nowise rejected that of the Holy See. What they dreaded was not a pope at a distance from them, impartial and universally respected at Rome, but a kind of new pope at Canterbury, within the territory and under the influence of their hereditary foes, the Saxons.[1] And, above all else, they objected to be told of the duty of labouring for the conversion of the odious Saxons, who had slaughtered their forefathers and usurped their lands. "No," said the abbot of Bangor, "we will not preach the faith to this cruel race of strangers who have treacherously driven our ancestors from their country, and robbed their posterity of their heritage."[2]

It is easy to see which of the three conditions Augustin had most at heart by the threatening prediction with which he met the refusal of the British monks. "Since you will not have peace with brethren, you shall have war with enemies: since you will not show to the English the way of life, you shall receive from their hands the punishment of death."

This prophecy was only too cruelly fulfilled some years later. The king of the northern English, Ethelfrid, still

Pascha suo tempore celebretis, ut ministerium baptizandi, quo Deo renascimur, juxta morem sanctæ Romanæ et apostolicæ Ecclesiæ compleatis, ut genti Anglorum una nobiscum verbum Domini prædicetis, cætera quæ agitis, quamvis moribus nostris contraria æquanimiter cuncta tolerabimus." —BEDE, v. 18.

[1] Hook, the most recent English historian of the archbishops of Canterbury, acknowledges this fact with an impartiality which is not always habitual to him. We shall be excused discussing the pretended antipapal reply of the orator of Bangor, an English invention, published in the collections of Spelman and Wilkins, and complacently repeated by M. Augustin Thierry. Lingard, Döllinger, *op. cit.*, p. 218, and Professor Walter, have demonstrated its falsity, already exposed by Turberville in his *Manuale Controversiarum;* Rees, Stephenson, Hussey, and all the modern English writers of any weight, have agreed to renounce it. Let us recall here the learned and deeply-to-be-lamented Abbé Gorini's excellent refutation of the inexcusable errors committed by M. Augustin Thierry in his narrative of the mission of St. Augustin.

[2] Welsh chronicle, entitled *Brut Tysilio*, and GALFRID. MONMOUTHO, xi. 2, ap. WALTER, *op. cit.*, pp. 225, 227.

a pagan, invaded the district of Wales in which stood the great Monasery of Bangor. At the moment when the battle began between his numerous army and that of the Welsh, he saw at a distance, in an elevated position, a body of men, unarmed, and on their knees. "Who are these?" he asked. He was told they were the monks of the great Monastery of Bangor, who, after fasting for three days, had come to pray for their brethren during the battle. "If they pray to their God for my enemies," said the king, "they are fighting against us, unarmed though they be." And he directed the first onslaught to be made against them. The Welsh prince, who should have defended them, fled shamefully, and 1200 monks were massacred on the field of battle, martyrs of Christian faith and of Celtic patriotism.[1] Thus ended, say the annals of Ireland, the day of the slaughter of the saints.[2]

An old calumny, revived in our day, makes Augustin answerable for this invasion, and accuses him of having pointed out the Monastery of Bangor to the Northumbrian heathens.[3] But the Venerable Bede expressly states that he had been for a long time a saint in heaven when this

[1] "Cum videret sacerdotes . . . seorsum in loco tutiore consistere, sciscitabatur quid essent hi, quidve acturi illo convenissent. . . . Ergo si adversum nos at Deum suum clamant, profecto et ipsi quamvis arma non ferant contra nos pugnant. Itaque in hos primum arma verti jubet, et sic cæteras nefandæ militiæ copias . . . delevit . . . ut etiam temporalis interitus ultione sentirent perfidi, quod oblata sibi perpetuæ salutis consilia spreverant."—BEDE, v. 18.

[2] *Annales Tighernach*, ad ann. 606.

[3] This false imputation can be traced back to Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bishop of St. Asaph in the twelfth century, and mouthpiece of the national rancours of Wales. Certain obscure writers, unworthy descendants of the Anglo-Saxons, such as Goodwin and Hammond, have adopted it out of hatred of the Romish Church, and, not knowing how to reconcile it with Bede's positive assertion of the prior death of Augustin, have pretended that this passage of the Venerable historian had been interpolated. But all the modern editors of Bede have been obliged to acknowledge that the contested passage existed in all the MSS. of that author *without exception*. Compare LINGARD, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 74; VARIN, *Premier Mémoire*, pp. 25–29; GORINI, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 77.

invasion took place. It is enough that Bede himself, much more Saxon than Christian whenever he treats of the British, applauds this massacre more than a century afterwards, and sees in it Heaven's just vengeance on what he calls the infamous army of the disloyal Welsh—that is to say, on the heroic Christians who, in defence of their hearths and altars, fell beneath the sword of the pagan Anglo-Saxons, under the orders of a chief who, according to the testimony of Bede himself, slew more of the native population than any of his predecessors.[1]

After such an explosion of his own national antipathies, he seems to be singularly little entitled to reproach the Celts of Wales with the steadfastness of their resentment, as he does in stating that even in his time they made no account of the religion of the Anglo-Saxons, and would hold no more communion with them than with pagans.[2]

It is possible, as an ingenious critic has said, that Augustin and his companions did not treat with sufficient tact the national and insular pride of the British, heightened by a long warlike resistance, by the traditions of the monks, and the patriotic songs of the bards.[3] But nothing, I repeat, indicates the slightest departure on his part from the counsel and example of the glorious pontiff whose disciple and emulator he was. Condemned by the obstinacy of the British to deprive himself of their assistance, he none the less continued his "hunt of men," as his biographer calls it, by evangelising the Saxons, who at least did not wear him out, like the Welsh, with their wordiness and their endless discussions.[4] And yet, even among the former he sometimes encountered an opposition which expressed itself in

[1] BEDE, i. 34.

[2] BEDE, ii. 20. See the text already cited, p. 75.

[3] OZANAM, p. 153.

[4] "Vix crediderim Augustinum a quoquam paganorum majori fatigatum verborum ambage. . . . In occidentalem ab Aquiloni plagam divertit, non tam viatoris quam venatoris aut aucupis morem gerens."—GOTSELINUS, *Hist. Maior*, c. 32, 41.

insult and derision, especially when he passed beyond the bounds of Ethelbert's kingdom. On one occasion, while traversing that region of the country of the West Saxons which is now called Dorsetshire, he and his companions found themselves in the midst of a seafaring population, who heaped on them affronts and outrages. These heathen savages not only refused to hear them, but even drove them away with acts of violence, and in hunting them from their territory, with a rude derision truly Teutonic, fastened to the black robes of the poor Italian monks, as a mark of contempt, the tails of the fish which formed their livelihood.[1] Augustin was not a man to be discouraged by such trifles. Besides, he found in other places crowds more attentive and more impressible. And thus he persevered for seven entire years, until his death, in his apostolic journeys—travelling after, as well as before, his archiepiscopal consecration, like a true missionary, always on foot, without carriage or baggage, and adding to his unwearied preaching good works and miracles—here making unknown springs gush from the ground, there healing by his touch the sick believed to be incurable or dying.[2]

Meanwhile Ethelbert did not fail in solicitude for and generosity to the Church of which he had become the ardent disciple. Not content with the gifts which he had bestowed on the two great monasteries of Canterbury—on

[1] "Plebs impia . . . tota ludibriorum et opprobriorum in sanctos debacchata . . . nec manu pepercisse creditur. . . . Fama est illos effulminandos provenientes marinorum piscium caudas sanctis appendisse."—GOTSELINUS, c. 41.

[2] "Tam post præsulatum quam ante, semper pede, absque vehiculo patients ambulando, liber et expeditus prædicationi evangelicæ."—ELMHAM, *Hist. Monaster. St. Augustini*, p. 106. Compare GOTSELINUS, c. 44 and 49. This historian reproduces the story of an old man whose grandfather had, while still young, been a scoffer at the wonderful stranger whom the crowd followed and surrounded as though he were an angel from heaven, because he went about healing all their infirmities. "Cum vero audissem illum omnium debilium ac moribundorum curare corpora-ampliori incredulus cachinnabam vesania." He ended, nevertheless, in being baptized by the hand of Augustin himself.

that which surrounded the metropolitan church, and on the Abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul without the walls—he seconded with all his might the introduction of Christianity into a kingdom adjacent to his own and placed under his suzerainty—that of the Saxons of the East, or of Essex, the king of which was the son of his sister, and which was only separated from Kent by the Thames. Augustin having sent thither as bishop the monk Mellitus, one of the new missionaries sent to him by Gregory, Ethelbert built at London, the chief city of the West Saxons, a church, dedicated to St. Paul, intended for a cathedral, which it still is. In his own kingdom of Kent he authorised the erection of a second bishopric, situated at Rochester, a Roman city, twenty miles west of Canterbury; Augustin placed there as bishop another of the new missionaries, Justus by name; and the king caused a cathedral to be built there, which he named after St. Andrew, in memory of the Roman monastery whence Pope Gregory had drawn all the apostles of the Anglo-Saxon race.[1]

All these foundations, destined to last to our own times in spite of so many strange unhappy changes, invest him with an imperishable claim on the gratitude of Christian posterity; and long afterwards, when the Norman nobility had in their turn seized upon the supreme power and changed the aspect of the Church of England, King Ethelbert became apparent to her as the first who had provided with seignorial strongholds, in the shape of bishops' seats and monasteries, the kingdom which he desired to hold in fee for the Lord God.[2]

He did yet more for the Church of his country by securing for her property and her liberties what we may call, in modern rather than just terms, a legal and parlia-

[1] BEDE, ii. 3.

[2] "Tum episcopia et monasteria tanquam dominica castella, quibus Dominicum regnum teneatur, liberaliter ac regaliter passim machinatur." —GOTSELINUS, *Hist. Maior*, c. 23.

mentary sanction. In one of those periodical assemblies of the sages and chief men of the Saxon people, which bore the name of *Witena-gemot*, and which were the origin of the modern Parliament, he caused certain laws—the text of which is still preserved—to be committed to writing and published in the Anglo-Saxon tongue. They confirmed at once the old rights of the people, and the new rights conceded to the new Church. The first of the ninety articles of that legislative act enacts that those who should rob the goods of the Church, of the bishops, or other orders of the clergy, shall make restitution eleven or twelve times beyond the value of the robbery.[1] The same article sanctioned implicitly what the English have since named the *right of sanctuary*—that is, the right of asylum and protection recognised as belonging to the precincts of churches and monasteries—by visiting the violation of that peace of the Church with a penalty the double of that incurred by violation of the public peace. The whole nation thus sanctioned and ratified the work of its king by placing under the safeguard of penal laws the property and safety of the ministers of the religion which it had adopted.[2]

These laws, long known by the name of *Dooms* or *Judgments of Ethelbert*, are the first written laws known to us, not only of the English, but perhaps of any of the Germanic races. The best informed critics attribute to the influence of the Roman monks on the Anglo-Saxon king, this com-

[1] "Ut ecclesiæ peculium duodecies, episcopi undecies emendaretur."—According to the instructions given by Gregory to Augustin, this surplus value of the restitution did not profit the Church, which was bound to be content with the simple restoration of what had been taken.

[2] "Inter cætera bona quæ genti suæ conferendo conferebat, etiam decreta illi judiciorum juxta exempla Romanorum, cum concilio sapientium constituit. . . . Volens scilicet tuitionem eis quos et quorum doctrinam susceperat, præstare."—BEDE, ii, 5. Compare KEMBLE, *Saxons in England*, ii. 205; HOOK, *op. cit.*, p. 59; WILKINS, *Concilia*, p. 25; THORPE, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, 1840, c. 1. This last publication, executed by order of the English Government, gives the Saxon text of the laws of Ethelbert, with a very intelligent commentary.

mencement of the national, or rather penal code.[1] For its enactments were chiefly penal, and we cannot but admire the wisdom of those missionaries who, trained in the traditions of Roman jurisprudence, nevertheless established and sanctioned the principle of pecuniary compensation universally adopted by the Germanic races. In these laws of Ethelbert a classification of social position is clearly apparent from the minutely exact enumeration of crimes committed against the life or safety of men, the honour of women, religion, and public peace. Every trespass is punished by a penalty proportionate—first, to the gravity of the offence, and next, to the rank of the victim. In case of murder, the compensation is due not only to the family of the deceased, but also to the community of which he was a member, and to the king who was his sovereign. This system, applied for the first time to the defence of the Christian Church by the Saxons of Kent, and for the first time reduced to a written form under the guidance of the Roman monks, will be found in all the subsequent legislation of the Saxon kingdoms, which the bishops and monks, successors of Augustin, continued to guide with a strong yet gentle hand into the ways of Christian civilisation.

Great men, commissioned by God to begin works which are to be truly great and enduring, seldom live to old age; and when one of them disappears, it often happens that he carries with him on his way to a better world those who have been on earth his companions, servants, and friends. St. Gregory the Great, whose pontificate has left an ineffaceable impression upon the memory of Christendom, and a peerless example in the annals of the Church, reigned only fifteen years. He died in the early months of the year 605, and two months after Augustin followed his father and friend to the tomb.[2] The Roman missionary

[1] LAPPENBERG, vol. i. p. 142; LINGARD, *Hist. of England*, c. 11; Lord CAMPBELL, *Lives of the Chancellors*, art. Angemundus; especially PHILLIPS, *Geschichte des Angelsachsichschen Rechts*, p. 61.

[2] There has been much dispute about the date of the death of Augustin,

was interred, after the Roman custom, by the side of the public way, the great Roman road which led from Canterbury to the sea, and in the unfinished church of the famous monastery which was about to assume and to preserve his name.

The name of Gregory will remain always identified with that conversion of England which was the labour of love of his whole life, and the greatest glory of his pontificate. His large and tender heart had been the first to conceive the thought of that conquest. His patient and conciliating genius, at once ardent and gentle, prudent and resolute, revealed to him the conditions of success. It is to him that the English race—at this day the most numerous and powerful of all Christian races—owes the revelation of the light of the Gospel.

He was the true apostle, the conqueror of England for God, and, through England, of immense countries which she has subjected to her laws, to her language, and to her religion. It is, then, with good reason that the first English historian claims for him this title. "Called," says Bede, "to a supreme pontificate over all the nations already converted to the faith, to our nation which was in bondage to idols, and out of which he has formed a Christian Church, he has been something more. We may well say of Gregory what Paul said of himself to the Corinthians—that if he has not been the apostle of others, he has been *our* apostle. Yes, we are the seal of his apostleship in the Lord—we, the people whom he rescued from the fangs of the old enemy, to make us partakers of the eternal freedom." [1]

which Mabillon had fixed in 607. But the majority of English historians are now agreed upon the date 605. Wharton would even place it as early as 604.—*Anglia Sacra*, vol. i. p. 91.

[1] Quia etsi aliis non est apostolus, sed tamen nobis est; nam signaculum apostolatus ejus nos sumus in Domino. . . . Quod nostram gentem per prædicatores quos huc direxit, de dentibus antiqui hostis eripiens, æternæ libertatis fecit esse participem."—BEDE, ii. 1.

The nature of the means that Gregory employed to accomplish his work, and the moral perfection of the arrangements which he brought to bear on it, are even more to be admired than the work itself;—zeal, devotion, wisdom, moderation, love of souls and respect for their freedom, pity, generosity, vigilance, indomitable perseverance, divine gentleness, intelligent patience—nothing was awanting in him. We leave the history of his pontificate, and especially of his intercourse with England, with no other regret than that inseparable from witnessing the end of so noble a life; and in losing sight of him, are left uncertain which should be the most admired—his good sense or his good heart, his genius or his virtue.

The figure of St. Augustin of Canterbury naturally pales beside that of St. Gregory the Great; his renown is, as it were, absorbed into the brilliant centre of the pontiff's glory. And recent English and German historians[1] have taken delight in bringing out the inferiority of the man whom Gregory chose for his vicegerent and his friend. They have vied with each other in decrying his character and services —accusing him by turns of hauteur and of feebleness, of irresolution and of obstinacy, of softness and of vanity,—trying, especially, to heighten and magnify the indications of hesitation and of self-seeking which they discover in his life. Let it be permitted to these strange precisians to reproach him with having stopped short of the ideal of which they pretend to dream, and which no hero of theirs has ever approached. To our judgment, the few shadows which fall on the noble career of this great saint are left there to touch the hearts and console the spirits of those who are, like him, infirm, and charged sometimes with a mission which, like him, they judge to be beyond their strength.

Among the workers of great works who have changed the history of the world and decided the fate of nations, one

[1] Stanley, Hook, Lappenberg.

loves to meet with those infirmities, which give encouragement to the common average of men.

Let us, then, preserve intact our admiration and our gratitude for the first missionary — the first bishop and abbot of the English people. Let us give our meed of applause to that council which, a century and a half after his death, decreed that his name should be always invoked in the Litanies after that of Gregory, "because it is he who, sent by our father Gregory, first carried to the English nation the sacrament of baptism and the knowledge of the heavenly country." [1]

[1] "Qui genti Anglorum a præfato Papa et patre nostro missus . . . scientiam fidei, baptismi sacramentum et cœlestis patriæ notitiam primus attulit."—*Concilium Clovesho viense*, anno 747.

CHAPTER III

FIRST SUCCESSORS OF ST. AUGUSTIN— PAGAN REACTION

Special characteristics of the conversion of England.—All the details of it are known : it has had neither martyrs nor persecutions ; it has been the exclusive work of Benedictine or Celtic monks.—All the Roman missionaries were monks ; their monasteries served for cathedrals and parish churches.—Laurence, first successor of Augustin.—Mellitus at the council of Rome in 610 ; Pope's letter to Ethelbert ; monks of Saxon origin.—Efforts of Laurence to reconcile the British ; his letter to the Irish Bishops.—Conversion of the kings of East Anglia and Essex.—Foundation of Westminster ; legend of the fisher ; King Sebert the first to be buried there ; monastic burials ; Nelson and Wellington. —Canterbury and Westminster, the metropolis and national necropolis of the English, due to the monks.—Death of Bertha and of Ethelbert ; the abbot Peter drowned.—Eadbald, the new king of Kent, remains a pagan ; his subjects, as also the Saxons of the East, return to paganism. —Flight of the bishops of London and Rochester ; Archbishop Laurence held back by St. Peter.—Conversion of Eadbald.—Apostasy of the king of East Anglia ; he admits Christ among the Scandinavian gods. —Mellitus and Justus, the second and third successors of Augustin.

THE preaching of the Gospel in England is marked by several characteristics altogether peculiar to itself, and distinguishing it from those revolutions which introduced Christianity into the western nations previously converted to the faith.

In Italy, Gaul, and Spain, the propagation of the Gospel and the extinction of paganism are surrounded with such obscurity that it is impossible to be sure of the date at which the first evangelists of most of the dioceses lived. In England, on the other hand, nothing is vague or uncertain. Year by year, and day by day, we witness the various phases

of the grand event. We take part, as it were, in the very work—the conversion of a great country—which it is so rarely possible to study in detail. We can follow it in all its changes of fortune with the same certainty and precision as if it were an incident in our contemporary missions.

Moreover, in the great lands and illustrious churches which have just been named, the baptism of blood everywhere accompanied or preceded the conversion of the people. Like the apostles at Rome and in the East, the missionaries of the Gospel in the West had, for the most part, to water with their blood the first furrows that they were honoured to draw in the field of the divine Husbandman. Even after the great imperial persecutions had come to an end, martyrdom often crowned the apostolate of the first bishops or their auxiliaries.

In England there was nothing at all like this ; from the first day of St. Augustin's preaching, and during the whole existence of the Anglo-Saxon Church, there was neither martyr nor persecutor there. When brought within the circle of the pure and radiant light of Christianity, and even before they acknowledged and worshipped it, these fierce Saxons, pitiless as they were to their enemies, showed themselves very much more humanely disposed and accessible to the truth than the enlightened and civilised citizens of Imperial Rome. Not one drop of blood was shed for the sake of religion, or under any religious pretext ; and this wonder occurred at a time when blood flowed in torrents for the most frivolous motives, and in that island where afterwards so many piles were to be lighted, and so many scaffolds raised, to immolate the English who should remain true to the faith of Gregory and Augustin.

A third distinctive feature of the conversion of England is that it was exclusively the work of monks ; first, of Benedictine monks sent from Rome—and afterwards, as we shall see, of Celtic monks, who seemed for a moment about to eclipse or supplant the Italian monks, but who soon suffered

themselves to be absorbed by the influence of the Benedictines, and whose spiritual posterity is inseparably connected with that of the Roman missionaries in the common observance of the rule of the great legislator of the monks of the West.

The monastic profession of these first missionaries has been the subject of frequent and long dispute. While it has been admitted that many were of the order to which he himself belonged, it has been denied that all the monks sent by St. Gregory the Great were Benedictines. But the unerring and unrivalled learning of Mabillon has settled the question by irrefutable arguments.[1] It is possible that some clerks or secular priests were to be found among the assistants of the first Archbishop of Canterbury; but it is distinctly

[1] In the preface of the first century of the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti*, paragraph 8, Mabillon has completely proved against Baronius and Marsham, one of the editors of the *Monasticon Anglicanum*, that Gregory, Augustin, and their disciples belonged to the order of St. Benedict. The brethren of Saint-Maur, in the life of Gregory placed at the beginning of their edition of his works, have completed the proof (book iii. c. 5, 6, 7). These brief but weighty pages say more on the subject than the folio entitled *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Anglia, sive Disceptatio Historica de Antiquitate Ordinis Congregationisque Monachorum Nigrorum in Regno Angliæ*, opera R. P. CLEMENTIS REYNERI, Duaci, 1626. This ill-arranged and tedious compilation is nevertheless important for the later history of England, on account of the numerous and curious articles which it contains. One of the most curious is the note asked and obtained by the author from the four most celebrated and learned English Protestants of his time, Cotton, Spelman, Camden, and Selden, who unanimously declare that all their researches have led them to the conclusion that St. Augustin, his companions, and his successors, were Benedictines. The English text of this is to be found in STEVENS, *Continuation of Dugdale*, vol. i. p. 171. A modern Anglican, Soames, has recently asserted that the Benedictines did not arrive till the tenth century with St. Dunstan; but he has been refuted by the two most distinguished of modern English archæologists, the Protestant Kemble and the Catholic Lingard. The latter, however, is in error in supposing (*History and Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 152) that Augustin placed in the Cathedral of Canterbury clerks and not monks. He has mistaken the early synonymy of the words *clerici* and *monachi*, in modern times used to express two entirely distinct ideas, but which were employed indifferently from the days of Gregory of Tours to those of the Venerable Bede, and even later.

proved, by the authority of Bede and of all the earliest records, that Augustin himself and his successors, as well as all the religious of his metropolitan church and the great abbey which bore his name, followed the rule of St. Benedict, like the great Pope whose mission they carried out. Grégory, as has been seen, was desirous of taking advantage of the new ecclesiastical organisation of England to introduce there that close alliance of the monastic and ecclesiastical life which, to his mind, realised the ideal of the apostolic church. For more than a century that alliance was universal and absolute. Wherever the pagan temples were transformed into churches—wherever the old churches of the time of the Romans and Britons rose from their ruins—there monastic life prevailed among the missionaries who served the cures. The converted country was thus, little by little, overspread by monasteries; the small ones for a long time held the place of rural parish churches; the large served for cathedrals, chapter-houses, and residences for bishops, who were all produced by the monastic orders.

The first thirty-eight archbishops of Canterbury were all monks; and the first four successors of St. Augustin were taken from among the monks of the Monastery of St. Andrew at Rome, whom Pope Gregory had appointed to be his fellow-workmen. During his life, Augustin had chosen as his successor in the primacy his companion Laurence, and had procured his consecration beforehand, thus meaning, with fatherly anxiety, to make the best provision for the frail fortunes of the new-born Church of the English.[1] The new archbishop did honour to the

[1] "Ne se defuncto adhuc status ecclesiæ tam rudis, vel ad horam pastore destitutus, vacillare inciperet."—BEDE, ii. 4. The last historian of the Archbishops of Canterbury, Dr. Hook, maintains that Laurence was not a monk, taking as his ground the passage in which Bede describes him as priest to distinguish him from his companion Peter the monk: "Misit continuo Romam Laurentium presbyterum et Petrum monachum" (i. 27). He forgets that this same Peter is himself described as priest some pages farther on: "Primus ejusdem monasterii abbas Petrus pres-

choice which had honoured him. He devoted himself nobly to the consolidation of the Church which he had seen founded; he conciliated all hearts, and increased the number of the faithful by the unwearied activity of his preaching no less than by the saintly example of his life.

Laurence lived for ten years in an intimate union with the good king Ethelbert, and acted as the medium of communication between that prince and the Holy See. The third successor of Gregory, Boniface IV.—he who consecrated the Roman Pantheon to Christian worship in memory of all the martyrs—exhibited towards the king and the missionary monks of the kingdom of Kent a goodwill and confidence worthy of his illustrious predecessor. Mellitus, the new bishop of the East Saxons, was sent by Laurence to Rome to consult the Pope upon different matters affecting the interests of the Church of England. He was one of the members of the Council of Rome, in which were promulgated the canons which confirmed the rule of St. Benedict, and accorded to the monks the right of administering the sacraments and of being admitted to all the grades of the priesthood.[1] Mellitus brought back to England the decrees of this council, which he had himself signed along with the other bishops; he brought likewise very gracious letters from the Pope to the archbishop and to the king. "Glorious king," Boniface wrote to Ethelbert, "we accord to you with right good will that which you have demanded of the Apostolic See through our co-bishop Mellitus: to wit, that in the monastery which your holy teacher Augustin, the disciple of Gregory, of blessed memory, consecrated under the name of the Holy Saviour, in your city of Canterbury, and over which our very dear brother Laurence now presides, you should estab-

byter fuit" (i. 33). The title of priest was not at all incompatible with the monastic profession. That point was settled at the Council of Rome in 610—only then, as now, all monks were not in priest's orders.

[1] "Cum idem Papa cogeret synodum episcoporum Italiæ, de vita monachorum et quiete ordinaturus."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

lish a dwelling for monks, living together in complete regularity; and we decree, by our apostolic authority, that the monks who have preached the faith to you may take this new monastic community into association with themselves, and teach its members to live a holy life."[1]

Through the obscurity of this language it seems natural to conclude that the introduction of new monks, probably of Saxon origin, into the Italian community founded by Augustin, is here indicated. A century passed, however, ere an abbot born in England could be chosen to preside over it.

Like Augustin, Archbishop Laurence was not content to labour for the salvation of the Saxons with his monkish brethren only: his pastoral anxiety urged him to search for the means of bringing the Christians of the ancient British race into unity with Rome, so that he and they might work together for the conversion of the pagans. His experience of the conditions under which the Christian religion might be successfully extended made him bitterly deplore the hostile attitude of the Celtic monks, and the polemical rancour which broke out in them whenever they sought or consented to discuss the matters in dispute. It was at the same moment that the illustrious Columbanus impaired the effect of the admirable example which he set to France, Burgundy, and Switzerland, by his extraordinary eccentricities. The rumour of them had reached even Laurence, who could not forbear referring to it in an epistle which he addressed to the bishops and abbots of all Scotia—that is to say, of Ireland —the chief centre of the Celtic Church. Having failed,

[1] "Fili gloriose, quod ab Apostolica sede per coepiscopum nostrum Mellitum postulatis, libenti animo concedimus; id est, ut vestra benignitas in monasterio in Dorobernensi civitate constituto, quod sanctus doctor vester Augustinus, beatæ memoriæ Gregorii discipulus, sancti Salvatoris nomini consecravit, cui ad præsens præesse dignoscitur dilectissimus frater noster Laurentius, licenter per omnia monachorum regulariter viventium habitationem statuat, apostolica auctoritate decernentes ut ipsi vestri prædicatores monachi monachorum gregem sibi associent et eorum vitam sanctitatum (*sic*) moribus exornent."—GUILLELMUS MALMESBUR., *De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum*, lib. i. p. 118, ed. Savile.

like Augustin, in a direct advance which, with his two suffragans, he had made to the clergy of the Welsh Britons, he sought to ascend to the source of the evil by writing to their brethren in the neighbouring island to expostulate with them on their universal intolerance. His letter begins thus:—

"To our very dear brethren, the lords, bishops, and abbots of Ireland,—We, Laurence, Mellitus, and Justus, servants of the servants of God, greeting. The Holy See having directed us, as is its wont, to these western regions, there to preach the faith to the heathen, we have entered this island of Britain, not knowing what we did. Believing that they all followed the rules of the universal Church, we held in great veneration the piety of the Britons and the Scots. When we came to know the Britons, we thought the Scots were better than they. But now, when the bishop Dagan has come to us from Ireland, and when the abbot Columbanus has betaken himself to Gaul, we know that the Scots differ in nothing from the Britons; for the bishop Dagan has not only refused to partake of our hospitality—he has not even deigned to eat in the place which serves as our dwelling." [1] Dagan was a monk of the great Irish Monastery of Bangor: he had come to confer with the mission at Canterbury, and he had undoubtedly been offended by the firm determination of the Roman prelates to maintain the conditions of liturgical unity. No trace has survived of any overtures towards reconciliation on his part, or on that of any other representative of the Celtic Churches.

The Roman monks were for some time more successful among the Saxon settlements—neighbours or vassals of the monarchy of Ethelbert. The most eastern district of the island—that which, lying between the Thames and the sandy outlets of the Ouse, forms a sort of circular projection looking towards Scandinavia—was occupied, towards the north, by the tribe of East Angles, or English of the

[1] BEDE, *loc. cit.*

East. Their king, Redwald, who had paid a visit to the king of Kent, received baptism like him; and his conversion awakened hopes of the conversion of his people—a population much more numerous than that of the country already won for Christ, occupying as it did the large modern counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, with a part of the shires of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Bedford, and Hertford. Between East Anglia and Kent lay the kingdom of Essex, or of the Saxons of the East, already converted during Augustin's life, thanks to its king Sebert, the nephew of the Bretwalda Ethelbert. This kingdom was particularly important on account of its capital, the ancient Roman colony of LONDON, where Mellitus had been appointed bishop by Augustin.

He had founded there, as we have seen, on the ruins of an ancient temple of Diana, a monastic cathedral, dedicated to St. Paul. Soon after, to the west of the episcopal city, and on the site of a temple of Apollo, which had supplanted, after the Diocletian persecution, a church occupied by the first British Christians,[1] the new Bishop of London built, with the concurrence of Sebert the king, another church and a monastery dedicated to St. Peter. Thus on the banks of the Thames, as on those of the Tiber, and in expressive and touching remembrance of Rome, the two princes of the apostles found in these two sanctuaries, separate yet near, a new consecration of their glorious brotherhood in the apostolate and martyrdom.

This modest monastic colony established itself on a frightful and almost inaccessible site,[2] in the middle of a deep marsh, on an islet formed by an arm of the Thames, and so covered with briars and thorns that it was called Thorney Island. From its position to the west of London it took a new name, destined to rank among the most famous in the world—that of WESTMINSTER, or Monastery of the West.

[1] DUGDALE, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vol. i. p. 55.

[2] "In loco terribili."—Charter quoted by RIDGWAY, *The Gem of Thorney Island*, p. 4.

As far as our history can extend, it will always find the national sanctuary of England encircled with growing splendour and celebrity. But at present our business is only to record the legend which brightens its humble cradle—a legend which we have already met with among the British at Glastonbury, and which we shall find among other nations at the beginning of other great monastic foundations—in France as that of St. Denis, in Switzerland at Einsiedlen—and which has exercised on the imagination of the English people an influence more durable and powerful than is generally produced by the best-authenticated facts. Up to the sixteenth century it was still told from generation to generation that in the night preceding the day fixed for the consecration of the new church, and while Bishop Mellitus, within his tent, was preparing for the ceremony of the morrow, St. Peter, the great fisher of men, appeared under the form of an unknown traveller to a poor fisherman whose boat was moored on the bank of the Thames opposite the Isle of Thorns. The water was rough, and the river in flood. The stranger persuaded the fisherman to row him across to the opposite bank, and when he landed he made his way towards the new church. As he crossed its threshold, the fisherman with amazement saw the interior of the edifice lighted up. From floor to roof, within and without, a chorus of angelic voices filled the air with a music such as he had never heard, and with the sweetest odours. After a long interval the music ceased, and all disappeared except the stranger, who, returning, charged the fisherman to go and tell the bishop what he had seen, and how he, whom the Christians called St. Peter, had himself come to the consecration of the church which his friend King Sebert had raised to him.[1]

[1] "Ecce subito lux cœlestis emicuit. . . . Affuit cum apostolo multitudo civium supernorum . . . aures angelicæ voces mulcebat sonoritas, nares indicibilis odoris fragantia perfundebat. . . . Nova Dei nupta, consecrante eo qui cœlum claudit et aperit, cœlestibus resplendet luminaribus.

This King Sebert and his wife were buried at Westminster; and subsequently, through many vicissitudes, the great abbey, becoming more and more dear to the Church, to the princes, nobles, and people, was the chosen burial-place of the kings and the royal family. It is still, in our time, as every one knows, the Pantheon of England, who has found no nobler consecration for the memory of her heroes, orators, and poets, her most glorious children, than to give them their last resting-place under the vaults of the old monastic sanctuary.[1] Near that sanctuary the royalty of England long sojourned; in one of its dependent buildings the House of Commons held its first meeting;[2] under its shadow the English Parliament, the most ancient, powerful, and glorious assembly in the world, has always flourished, and still remains. Never has a monument been more identified with the history of a people. Each of its stones represents a page of the country's annals!

. . . Fixis tentoriis a dimidio milliario. . . . Rediit ad piscatorem piscium egregius piscator hominum. . . . Ego sum quem Christiani sanctum Petrum apostolum vocant, qui hanc ecclesiam meam hac nocte Deo dedicavi . . . quam mihi ille meus amicus Sebertus fabricavit."—RIC. CIRENCESTER, *Speculum Hist. de Gestis Reg. Angl.*, ii. 27. Dugdale quotes no less than four original versions of this miracle, extracted from ancient English chronicles. Compare BARONIUS, *Annal.*, an. 610, c. 10, and *Acta SS. Bolland.*, January, i. p. 246. Hook gives a plausible enough explanation of the tradition.

[1] Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Grattan, Canning, Peel—all the great modern orators and statesmen, the poets, the admirals, the generals slain on the battle-field—there repose by the side of Edward the Confessor, and the kings and heroes of the middle ages. The words of Nelson at the moment of beginning the battle of Aboukir, "Now for a peerage or Westminster Abbey!" will be remembered by our readers. In our day the custom has been introduced of burying the great military chiefs at St. Paul's. Nelson and Wellington both rest in the vaults of the church which bears the name and occupies the site of the first foundation of Augustin's companion.

[2] It was in the fine chapter-house of Westminster Abbey that the Commons sat. Although their violent debates were lamented as disturbing the monastic worship, they remained there till the Reformation; when St. Stephen's Chapel, on the site of which the present House of Commons is placed, was allotted to them.

Canterbury embodies the religious life of England, Westminster has been the centre of her political life and her real capital; and England owes Canterbury, as she owes Westminster, to the sons of St. Benedict.

Meanwhile a shadow was about to fall on the dawn of the faith in England. The noble granddaughter of Clotilda, the gentle and pious Queen Bertha, was dead. She preceded her husband in her death, as in her faith, and was buried beside the great Roman missionary who had given her the joy of seeing her husband's kingdom, and her husband himself, converted to Christianity.

When the first successor of Augustin celebrated the solemn consecration of the great monastic church which was to be the burying-place, or, as they said then, the bed of rest (*thalamus*) for Christian kings and primates, the remains of the queen, and of the first Archbishop of Canterbury, were transferred thither; those of the queen were laid in front of the altar sacred to St. Martin, the great wonder-worker of Gaul, and those of the primate before the altar of his father and friend, St. Gregory.[1] Three years later, Ethelbert, who had married again, also died, and was buried by Bertha's side in the church of St. Augustin. He reigned fifty-six years, twenty of which he had been a Christian. "He was," says Bede, "the first English king who ascended to heaven, and the Church numbered him among her saints."[2]

Laurence thus remained the sole survivor of all who had taken part, twenty years before, in the famous conference in the Isle of Thanet, at which the Saxon king and Frankish queen met the Roman missionaries. His companion, Peter, the first abbot of the monastery of St. Augustin, was drowned on the French coast, some time before, while ful-

[1] GUILLELM. THORNE, *Chron. S. August.*, p. 1765; THOMAS DE ELMHAM, *Hist. Monast. S. August.*, p. 432, ed. Hardivicke; STANLEY, *Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 26.

[2] *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. iii. February, p. 470.

filling a mission on which King Ethelbert had sent him. Laurence had thus to encounter all alone the storm which burst forth immediately after the death of Ethelbert. The conversion of that monarch had not ensured that of all his people; and Eadbald, his son, who succeeded to the throne, had not embraced Christianity along with his father. The looseness of his morals had helped to keep him in idolatry. When he became king he wished to marry his father's widow, the second wife whom Ethelbert had married after the death of Bertha. This kind of incest, with which St. Paul reproached the first Christians of Corinth,[1] was only too consonant with the usages of several of the Teutonic races;[2] but such a case had been anticipated, and formally forbidden, in Gregory's reply to Augustin, when consulted as to the matrimonial relations of the Saxons. This was not Eadbald's only crime. He gave himself up to such transports of fury that he was commonly regarded as beside himself, and possessed with a demon. But his example sufficed to draw into apostasy those who had embraced Christian faith and chastity only from motives of fear, or from a desire to stand well with King Ethelbert.

The tempest which threatened to engulf the recent Christianity of England, became more and more formidable when the death of Sebert, nephew of Ethelbert, and founder of Westminster, raised to the sovereignty of the kingdom of Essex his three sons, who, like the son of the king of Kent, had remained pagans. They immediately resumed the public practice of the idolatry which they had but for a short time foregone during the life of their father, and gave full liberty to all their subjects to worship idols. At the same time they still went occasionally to witness the ceremonies of the Christian worship; and one day, when the Bishop Mellitus was administering, in their presence, the communion to the faithful, they said to him, with the freedom of their barbarian pride, "Why do you

[1] 1 Cor. v. 1.

[2] KEMBLE, *Saxons in England*, ii. 407.

not offer us that white bread which you gave to our father, and which you continue to give to the people in your church?" "If you will be washed," answered the bishop, "in the fountain of salvation, as your father was, you may, like him, have your share of the holy bread; otherwise, it is impossible."

"We have no desire," replied the princes, "to enter your fountain—we have no need of it; but we want to refresh ourselves with that bread:" and as they insisted on it, the bishop repeated again that it was needful that they should be cleansed from all sin before being admitted to the communion. Then they flew into a rage, and ordered him to quit their kingdom with all that belonged to him: "Since you will not gratify us in a matter so simple, you shall stay no longer in our country."[1]

The Bishop of London thus driven away, crossed the Thames, and came into the kingdom of Kent, in order to confer with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Rochester as to the course he should pursue. These were the only three bishops of the Christian Church in England, and all three lost courage in presence of the new peril which threatened them. They decided that it was better that they should all return to their own country, there to serve God in freedom, than that they should remain uselessly among barbarians who had revolted from the faith. The two bishops were the first to fly, and crossed over to France. Laurence prepared to follow them, but in the night before his intended departure, wishing to pray and to weep without restraint over that English Church which he had helped to found a quarter of a century before, and which he was now obliged to abandon, he had his bed placed in the church of the monastery

[1] "Auxit procellam hujus perturbationis mors Sabercti. . . . Barbari inflati stultitia dicebant: Quare non et nobis panem nitidum porrigis. . . . Si vultis ablui fonte illo salutari. . . . Nolumus fontem illum intrare . . . si non vis adsentire nobis in tam facili causa quam petimus, non poteris jam in nostra provincia demorari."—BEDE, ii. 5.

where reposed Augustin, Ethelbert, and Bertha. Scarcely had he fallen asleep when St. Peter appeared to him, as Jesus Christ had erewhile appeared to St. Peter himself when the prince of the apostles, flying from Nero's persecution, met on the Appian Way his divine Master coming towards Rome, there to be, in his default, a second time crucified.[1] The prince of the apostles overwhelmed with reproaches, and even scourged till the blood came, the bishop who was ready to abandon Christ's flock to the wolves, instead of braving martyrdom to save it.

On the morrow Laurence showed his bruised and bleeding sides to the king, who, at the sight, asked who had dared thus to maltreat such a man as he. "It was St. Peter," said the bishop, "who inflicted on me all these blows and sufferings for your salvation."[2] Eadbald, moved and terrified, renounced idolatry, gave up his incestuous marriage, and promised to do his best for the protection of the Church. He called the two bishops, Mellitus and Justus, back from France, and sent them back to their dioceses to re-establish the faith in all freedom. After his conversion he continued to serve God with his people; he even built a new church dedicated to the Holy Virgin, in the monastery founded by St. Augustin, where he reckoned upon being buried beside his father and mother.

But he had not the same authority over the other Saxon realms with which Ethelbert had been invested in his capacity of Bretwalda, or military chief of the Saxon federation. He could not succeed in restoring Mellitus to his diocese.

[1] Every one has seen at Rome, on the Appian Way, the church called *Domine quo vadis*, built on the spot where, according to tradition, St. Peter put that question to the Lord, who answered him, *Vado Romam iterum crucifigi.*—S. AMBR., *Contra Auxentium.*

[2] "Flagellis arctioribus afficiens. . . . An mei, inquit, oblitus es exempli qui pro parvulis Christi . . . vincula, verbera, carceres, afflictiones, ipsam postremo mortem, mortem autem crucis, ab infidelibus et inimicis Christi ipse cum Christo coronandus pertuli. . . . Retecto vestimento . . . quantis esset verberibus laceratus ostendit. Qui . . . inquirens quis tanto viro ausus esset plagas infligere."—BEDE, ii. 6.

The princes of Essex who had expelled him had all perished in a war with the Saxons of the West; but their subjects persevered in idolatry, and the people of London offered the most determined resistance to the re-establishment of the Roman bishop, declaring that they greatly preferred their idolatrous priests.[1]

The kingdom of Essex seemed thus altogether lost to the faith; and as to East Anglia, the conversion of its king, Redwald, had not been serious and permanent. No sooner had he returned from the visit to Ethelbert, during which he received baptism, than he allowed himself to be brought back to the worship of his fathers by the influence of his wife and his principal counsellors; but he made the same concession to the new religion which had been already accorded to it by a Roman emperor—a concession much more worthy of a Cæsar of the Roman decadence than of the impetuous instincts of a barbarian king. He vouchsafed to assign to the Son of the only true God a place by the side of his Scandinavian deities, and established two altars in the same temple—the one for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the other for the victims offered to the idols.[2]

Of all the conquests made by the envoys of Gregory, there remained now only a portion of the country and of the people of Kent surrounding the two great monastic sanctuaries of Canterbury,—the metropolitan church dedicated to Christ, and the abbey of St. Augustin, then bearing the names of St. Peter and St. Paul. Roman missionaries, one after another, succeeded to the government of these two monas-

[1] "Nec, licet auctoribus perditis, excitatum ad scelera vulgus potuit recorrigi. . . . Londonienses episcopum recipere noluerunt, idololatris magis pontificibus servire gaudentes. Non enim tanta erat ei, quanta patri ipsius regni potestas, ut etiam nolentibus ac contradicentibus paganis antistitem suæ posset ecclesiæ reddere."—BEDE, ii. 6, 7.

[2] "Rediens domum, ab uxore et quibusdam perversis doctoribus seductus, in eodem fano et altare haberet ad sacrificium Christi et arulam ad victimas demoniorum."—BEDE, iii. 15. Bede adds that in his lifetime there was a king of East Anglia who in his childhood had seen that temple still standing.

teries, which were now the only centres in which the fire of Christian life still burned in England. During more than a century all the abbots of St. Augustin's monastery were chosen from among the Roman monks, and probably from those who came from Mount Cœlius to follow or join him.[1]

In the archiepiscopal see, Laurence, who died three years after his reconciliation to the new king, was succeeded by Mellitus, who thus finally renounced all idea of again settling among the Saxons of the east. After Mellitus, who, though tortured by the gout, showed an indefatigable devotion to his apostolic duties, Justus, the Bishop of Rochester, became archbishop. Like Augustin, he received the *pallium*, along with the privilege of ordaining bishops at his pleasure, a privilege conferred upon him by the Pope Boniface V., careful, as his predecessor Boniface IV. had been, to maintain the mission which Gregory had bequeathed to the special charge of the pontiff. The Pope had received letters from King Eadbald which filled him with comfort and hope; and in placing under the jurisdiction of Archbishop Justus the English not only of Kent but of all the neighbouring kingdoms, he exhorted him to persevere with commendable patience in the work of the redemption of the English people.[2]

Justus occupied the archbishop's throne for three years only, and was succeeded by Honorius, also a disciple of St. Gregory and St. Augustin, and the last of the companions

[1] The succession of these abbots, as given by Thomas Elmham in his chronicle of the abbey of St. Augustin, is as follows: John, † 618; Rufinianus, † 626; Gratiosus, † 638; this last, *Romanus natione*, as well as his successor Petronius, † 654; Nathaniel, "quondam cum Mellito a Justo a Roma ad Angliam destinatus," † 667; after him the celebrated Adrian, the African, whose successor Albin, elected in 708, was the first *de gente nostra*, says the historian, and was, moreover, the disciple of Adrian, a great Latinist, Hellenist, and *collaborateur* of Bede.

[2] "Hoc illa repensatione vobis collatum est, qua injuncto ministerio jugiter persistentes, laudabili patientia redemptionem gentis illius expectastis."—BEDE, ii. 8.

of the great missionary who was to fill his place in the primacy of the new Christian kingdom.

In the midst of these mistakes, perils, and difficulties, and while the third successor of Augustin maintained, as best he could, the remains of the Roman mission in the still modest and often menaced metropolis of Canterbury, the horizon suddenly brightened toward the north of England. An event occurred there which seemed to realise the first designs of St. Gregory, and to open new and vast fields for the propagation of the Gospel. It is in this northern region that the principal interest of the great drama which gave England to the Church is henceforth to be concentrated.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST MISSION IN NORTHUMBRIA—ITS SUCCESSES AND ITS DISASTER—BISHOP PAULINUS AND KING EDWIN

Extent and origin of the Anglo-Saxon settlements in Northumbria; thanks to their compatriot Bede, their history is better known than that of the others.—Ida and Ella, founders of the two kingdoms of Deïra and Bernicia; Bamborough and the Fair Traitress.—War of the Northumbrians and Britons: Ethelfrid the Ravager, conqueror of the Welsh and of the Scots under Aïdan, the friend of St. Columba.—Edwin, representing the rival dynasty, a refugee in East Anglia; on the point of being delivered over to his enemies, he is saved by the queen; vision and promise.—He becomes king of Northumbria and Bretwalda; list of Bretwaldas.—He marries the Christian Ethelburga, daughter of the king of Kent.—Mission of Bishop Paulinus, who accompanies the princess to York.—Influence of women in the conversion of the Saxons.—Fruitless preaching of Paulinus; letters of Boniface V. to the king and queen.—Edwin saved from the poignard of an assassin; birth of his daughter; war against the West Saxons.—Hesitation of Edwin; last effort of Paulinus.—Edwin promises to accept the faith after consulting his parliament.—Speeches of the high priest and of the chief captain.—Baptism of Edwin and of his nobility.—Bishopric and monastic cathedral of York.—The king and the bishop labour for the conversion of the Northumbrians.—General baptism by immersion.—Paulinus to the south of the Humber.—Foundations of Southwell and Lincoln.—Consecration of Honorius, fourth successor of Augustin at Canterbury.—Letter of Pope Honorius to the two metropolitans and to King Edwin.—Prosperous reign of Edwin.—Conversion of East Anglia; foundation of Edinburgh; conquest of Anglesea; public security; the woman and the foster-child; the copper cups; the *tufa* of the Bretwalda.—League of the Saxons and Britons of Mercia against the Saxons of Northumbria: Cadwallon and Penda.—Edwin is killed.—Flight of Paulinus and Ethelburga.—Overthrow of Christianity in Northumbria and East Anglia.—Check of the Roman missionaries; their virtues and their faults.—There remain to them only the metropolis and the abbey of St. Augustin at Canterbury, which continue to be the two citadels of Roman influence.

Of all the settlements made by the Teutonic conquerors of Britain, that of the Angles to the north of the river

Humber, which seems to divide into two parts the island of Great Britain, and from which is derived the name of Northumbria, was, beyond comparison, the most important. This kingdom occupied the whole eastern coast from the mouth of the Humber to the Firth of Forth, including the existing counties of York, Durham, and Northumberland, with all the south-eastern portion of modern Scotland. To the west it extended to the borders of the British territories of Cambria and Strathclyde, and even approached, on the frontiers of Caledonia, that new kingdom of the Scots of Ireland which the great missionary Columba had just inaugurated.

Northumbria was not merely the largest kingdom of the Saxon Heptarchy—it is also that whose history is the most animated, dramatic, and varied—the richest in interesting and original characters. It is that, in short, where the incidents of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon conquerors, and of the propagation of monastic institutions, appear to us in fullest light. This is naturally explained by the fact that it is the birthplace of the Venerable Bede. This great and honest historian—the English Gregory of Tours, and the father of British history—was born and always lived in Northumberland. Hence in his interesting narratives a natural prominence is given to the men and the affairs of his native region, along with an exact and detailed reproduction of the local traditions and personal recollections which he treasured up and repeated with such scrupulous care.

Bede informs us that about a century after the first landing of the Saxons, under Hengist, in the country of Kent, their neighbours, the Angles, crossing the North Sea, founded on the opposite coast of Britain two colonies, long distinct, sometimes united, but finally combined together under the name of Northumbria.[1] The wall anciently

[1] United from 588 to 633; separated at the death of Edwin in 634; and reunited anew under Oswald and Oswy.

raised by the Emperor Severus from the mouth of the Solway to that of the Tyne to check the Caledonian incursions, was their boundary. The oldest of the two kingdoms was that of the Bernicians to the north. Their chief, Ida—who, like Hengist, claimed to be a descendant of Odin—established his residence in a fortress which he called Bamborough, after his wife Bebba, with that conjugal reverence so often illustrated even among the most savage Germans. The British bards, in return, have named this queen the Fair Traitress, because she was of British origin, and fought in the foremost ranks on the field of battle against her countrymen.[1] The imposing remains of this fortress, situated on a detached rock on the coast, still surprise and arrest the traveller. From this point the invasion of the Angles spread over the fertile valleys of the Tweed and Tyne.

The second colony, that of the Deïrians, to the south, was concentrated principally in the valley of the Tees and in the extensive region which is now known as Yorkshire. The first chief of the Deïrians of whom anything is known, was that Alla or Ella, whose name—pronounced by the young slaves exposed for sale in the forum—suggested to St. Gregory the hope of soon hearing the Hallelujah echo through his kingdom.[2] This region, to the north of the Humber, was precisely that which had suffered most from the Caledonian incursions; and, according to some authors, the Saxons of Hengist, called in the character of allies by the Britons to their aid, were already established before the arrival of the Deïrian colony. But Ida and his Angles would not in any character hold tenure under their Germanic compatriots from the south of the island, and instead of fighting against the Picts or the Scots they leagued themselves with them to crush the ill-starred Britons.

Ida, who had twelve sons, and who reigned twelve years,

[1] A. DE LA BORDERIE, *Luttes des Bretons Insulaires contre les Anglo-Saxons*, p. 15.

[2] See *ante*, p. 180.

used fire and sword against the natives with such animosity that the British bards surnamed him the *Man of Fire*, or the *Great Burner*. They withstood him to the last extremity, and he fell in battle against them. But his grandson, Ethelfrid, took a terrible revenge. He was Ella's son-in-law; and at the death of the latter, and to the prejudice of the rights of the chief's son, Ethelfrid reunited the two kingdoms of Deïra and Bernicia, and mustering to his own standard all the Anglo-Saxons of Northumbria, he subdued or massacred a greater multitude of the Britons than any other of the invading chiefs.[1] He was, says Bede, the ravaging wolf of Holy Writ: in the morning he devoured his prey, and in the evening he divided his spoil. The vanquished, who had called his grandfather the Burner, had only too good cause to call Ethelfrid the Ravager.

He had not, however, like his predecessors, the Caledonians for auxiliaries. They had become Christians, thanks to the apostolic zeal of Columba and his Irish missionaries; and far from seconding the pagan invaders, the Dalriadian Scots, recently established in Great Britain,[2] came to the succour of the Britons, who were their fellow-Christians. Their king, Aïdan—the same who had been consecrated by Columba, the monastic apostle of Caledonia—marched against Ethelfrid at the head of a numerous army. But his friend, the holy monk of Iona, was no longer there, as of old,[3] to protect him with his prayers, and aid him with his ardent sympathies. The Scots and the Saxons met at Degstane, near the existing frontier of England and Scotland. After a desperate struggle the Scots army was cut to pieces; and this defeat put an end for ever to any desire on the part of the northern Celts to undertake the defence of their brethren of the south against the Teutonic conquerors.

[1] "Nemo in tribunis, nemo in regibus plures eorum terras, exterminatis vel subjugatis indigenis, aut tributarias genti Anglorum, aut habitabiles fecit."—BEDE, i. 34.

[2] "Rex Scotorum qui Britanniam inhabitant."—*Ibid.* See *ante*, p. 54.

[3] See *ante*, p. 71.

Having conquered the Scots, the formidable heathen threw himself on the Britons of Wales; and it was then that he fulfilled the prophecy of Augustin by exterminating the twelve hundred monks of Bangor. After this he completed the conquest of Northumbria, and fell, ten years later, in an encounter with his countrymen, the East Angles, under the command of that king Redwald whom we have seen professing Christianity for a time to please king Ethelbert.[1]

East Anglia, as the name itself indicates, was occupied by a colony of the same race as the Angles of Northumbria. On the death of the first Christian king of Kent, Redwald inherited the title of Bretwalda, which gave him a certain military supremacy over the whole Anglo-Saxon federation. He had given shelter to the son of Ella, who, while still a child, had been dethroned by his brother-in-law, the terrible Ethelfrid. This young prince, named Edwin, grew up at Redwald's court, and had even been married to the daughter of his protector. Ethelfrid, seeing in him a rival and a successor, employed by turns threats and bribes to induce Redwald to surrender the royal exile. The East Anglian prince was on the point of yielding, when one of the friends of Edwin came by night to apprise him of his danger, and offered to conduct him to a place of refuge, where neither Redwald nor Ethelfrid should be able to discover him. "No," replied the young and generous exile, "I thank you for your goodwill, but I shall do nothing. Why should I begin again to wander a vagabond through every part of the island, as I have too much done? If I must die, let it be rather by the hand of this great king than by that of a meaner man." Notwithstanding, moved and agitated by the news, he went out, and seated himself on a rock before the palace, where he remained for a long time alone and unnoticed, a prey to agonising uncertainty.[2]

[1] See *ante*, p. 240.

[2] "Si ergo vis, hac ipse hora te educam. . . . Gratias quidem ago benevolentiæ tuæ. . . . Quin potius, si moriturus sum, ille me magis quam

All at once he beheld before him, in the midst of the darkness, a man whose countenance and dress were unknown to him, who asked him what he did there alone in the night, and added, "What wilt thou promise to him who shall rid thee of thy grief, by dissuading Redwald from delivering thee up to thy enemies, or doing thee any harm?" "All that may ever be in my power," answered Edwin. "And if," continued the unknown, "he promised to make thee king, and a king more powerful than all your ancestors, and all the other kings in England?" Edwin promised anew that his gratitude would be commensurate with such a service. "Then," said the stranger, "if he who shall have exactly foretold to you such great fortunes, offers you counsels more useful for your welfare and your life than any of your fathers or kinsmen have ever received, do you consent to follow them?" The exile swore that he would implicitly obey him by whom he should be rescued from such great peril and made king.

Thereupon the unknown placed his right hand upon his head, saying, "When a like sign shall be shown thee, then recall this hour—thy words and thy promise." With this he disappeared so suddenly, that Edwin believed he had spoken not with a man but with a spirit.[1] A moment after his friend came running to announce that he had no longer anything to fear, and that king Redwald, having confided his project to the queen, had been dissuaded by her from his breach of faith.

This princess, whose name has been unfortunately for-

ignobilior quisquam morti tradat. . . . Solus ipse mœstus in lapide pervigil . . . cum diu tacitus mentis angoribus et cæco carperetur igni." —BEDE, ii. 12.

[1] "Quid mercis dare velis ei qui. . . . Quid si etiam regem te futurum . . . ita ut omnes qui ante te reges in gente Anglorum fuerant potestate transcendas. . . . Tum ille tertio: Si autem qui tibi tanta taliaque dona veraciter prædixerit. . . . Cum hoc ergo tibi signum advenerit, memento hujus temporis, ac loquelæ nostræ, et ea quæ nunc promittis adimplere ne differas. His dictis, ut ferunt, repente disparuit."—BEDE.

gotten, had, like most of the Anglo-Saxon women, an all-powerful influence in the heart of her husband. More happily inspired than when she had induced him to renounce the baptism which he had received when with Ethelbert,[1] she showed him how unworthy it would be to sell for gold his soul, and what is more, his honour, which she esteemed the most precious of all jewels.[2]

Under the generous influence of the queen, Redwald not only refused to give up the exiled prince, but having sent back the ambassadors entrusted with the costly presents of Ethelfrid, he declared war against him. The result was that, Ethelfrid having been defeated and slain, Edwin was established as king in Northumbria by his protector Redwald, who was now the chief of the Anglo-Saxon federation. The sons of Ethelfrid, although, on the mother's side, nephews of the new king, were obliged to fly, like Edwin himself in his youth. They went for refuge to the Dalriadian Scots, whose apostle Columba had been. We shall presently see what resulted from this exile, to Northumbria and the whole of England.

Like his brother-in-law Ethelfrid, Edwin reigned over the two united kingdoms of Deïra and Bernicia; and, like him, he waged a vigorous war against the Britons of Wales. Having thus become the dreaded chief of the Angles of the North, he found himself esteemed and sought after by the East Angles, who on the death of their king, Redwald, offered him the sovereignty. But Edwin preferred to repay the protection which he had received from Redwald and his wife by leaving the kingdom of East Anglia to their son. He reserved, however, the military supremacy which Redwald had exercised, as well as the title of Bretwalda, which had passed from the king of Kent to the king of East

[1] See *ante*, p. 247.

[2] "Postquam cogitationem suam reginæ in secreto revelavit, revocavit eum ille ab intentione . . . ammonens quia nulla ratione conveniat . . . immo fidem suam, quæ omnibus ornamentis pretiosior est amore pecuniæ perdere."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

Anglia, but which, after being held by Edwin, was to remain always attached to the Northumbrian monarchy.

We have no precise information regarding the origin or the nature of the authority with which the Bretwalda was invested. It is apparent only that this authority, at first of a temporary and exclusively military character, extended, after the conversion of the different kingdoms of the Heptarchy, to ecclesiastical affairs. It is evident also that it added to the royal dignity the prestige of a real supremacy, all the more sought after that it was probably conferred, not only by the vote of the other kings, but of all the chiefs of the Saxon nobility.[1]

Thus then was accomplished the mysterious prediction of Edwin's nocturnal visitor; he was now a king, and more powerful than any of the English kings before him. For the supremacy of the Bretwalda, added to the vast extent of country occupied by the Angles of the North and East, secured to the king of Northumbria a preponderance altogether different from that of the petty kings of the South who had borne the title before him. Having reached this unhoped-for elevation, and having lost his first wife, a daughter of the king of East Anglia, he sought a second bride,

[1] The *caldormen*—those whom Bede calls *primates tribuni*. Bede gives the following as the succession of chiefs of the Anglo-Saxon federation, up to the time when the title of Bretwalda became extinct:—

About 560, Ella, king of Sussex.
„ 577, Ceawlin, king of Wessex.
„ 596, Ethelbert, king of Kent.
„ 616, Redwald, king of East Anglia.
„ 624, Edin, } kings of Northumbria.
„ 635, Oswald, }
„ 645, Oswy, }

Lappenberg believes, with every appearance of reason, that after the death of Oswy, in 670, the authority of the Bretwalda passed to Wulfhere, king of Mercia, whose supremacy over the king of Essex is proved by Bede himself, iii. 30. Mackintosh interprets the term *Bret-walda* by that of *dompteur* or arbiter (*wielder*) of the Britons; but he gives no satisfactory reason for that etymology.

and asked in marriage the sister of the king of Kent, the daughter of Ethelbert and Bertha, a descendant of Hengist and Odin through her father, and of St. Clotilda through her mother. She was called Ethelburga—that is, noble protectress; for this word *Ethel*, which appears so often in Anglo-Saxon names, is simply, as has been already remarked, the German *edel*, noble. Her brother Eadbald, brought back by Archbishop Laurence to the Christian faith, at first refused the demand of the king of Northumbria. He answered that it was impossible for him to betroth a Christian virgin to a pagan, lest the faith and the sacraments of the true God should be profaned by making her live with a king who was a stranger to His worship. Far from being offended at this refusal, Edwin promised that, if the princess was granted to him, he would do nothing against the faith that she professed; but, on the contrary, she might freely observe all the rites of her religion, along with all who might accompany her to his kingdom—men or women, priests or laymen. He added that he would not himself refuse to embrace his wife's religion, if after having had it examined by the sages of his council he found it to be more holy and more worthy of God than his own.[1]

It was on these conditions that her mother Bertha had left her country and her Merovingian family to cross the sea and wed the king of Kent. The conversion of that kingdom had been the reward of her sacrifice. Ethelburga, destined, like her mother, and still more than she, to be the means of introducing a whole people to the knowledge of Christianity, followed the maternal example. She furnishes us with a new proof of the lofty part assigned to women in the history of the Germanic races, and of the noble and touching influence attributed to them. In England as in France, and everywhere, it is ever through the fervour and

[1] "Nec abnegavit se etiam eamdem subiturum esse religionem si tamen examinata a prudentibus sanctior et Deo dignior posset inveniri."—BEDE, ii. 9.

devotion of Christian women that the victories of the Church are attempted or achieved.

But the royal virgin was entrusted to the Northumbrians, only under the guardianship of a bishop charged to preserve her from all pagan pollution, by his exhortations, and also by the daily celebration of the heavenly mysteries. The king, according to Bede, had thus to espouse the bishop at the same time as the princess.[1]

This bishop, by name Paulinus, was one of those still surviving Roman monks who had been sent by St. Gregory to the aid of Augustin. He had been twenty-five years a missionary in the south of Great Britain, before he was consecrated bishop of Northumbria by the third successor of Augustin at Canterbury. Having arrived with Ethelburga in Edwin's kingdom, and having married them, he longed to see the whole of the unknown nation amongst whom he had come to pitch his tent, espoused to Christ. Unlike Augustin, after his landing on the shores of Kent, it is expressly stated that Paulinus was disposed to act upon the Northumbrian people before attempting the conversion of the king.[2] He laboured with all his might to add some Northumbrian converts to the small company of the faithful that had accompanied the queen. But his efforts were for a long time fruitless; he was permitted to preach, but no one was converted.

In the meantime the successors of St. Gregory watched over his work with that wonderful and unwearying perseverance which is characteristic of the Holy See. Boniface V., at the suggestion, no doubt, of Paulinus, addressed two letters to the king and queen of Northumbria, which recall those of Gregory to the king and queen of Kent. He ex-

[1] "Ordinatus episcopus . . . sic cum præfata virgine ad regem quasi comes copulæ carnalis advenit."—BEDE, ii. 9.

[2] "Toto animo intendens ut gentem quam adibat, ad cognitionem veritatis advocans, uni viro sponso virginem castam exhiberet Christo. . . . Laboravit multum ut . . . aliquos, si forte posset, de paganis ad fidei gratiam prædicando converteret."—*Ibid.*, ii. 9.

horted the glorious king of the English, as he calls him, to follow the example of so many other emperors and kings, and especially of his brother-in-law Eadbald, in submitting himself to the true God, and not to let himself be separated, in the future, from that dear half of himself, who had already received in baptism the pledge of eternal bliss.[1] He conjured the queen to neglect no effort to soften and inflame the hard and cold heart of her husband, to make him understand the beauty of the mysteries in which she believed, and the rich reward which she had found in her own regeneration, to the end that they twain whom human love had made one flesh here below, might dwell together in another life, united in an indissoluble union.[2] To his letters he added some modest presents, which testified assuredly either his poverty or the simplicity of the times: for the king, a linen shirt embroidered with gold and a woollen cloak from the east; for the queen, a silver mirror and an ivory comb; for both, the blessing of their protector St. Peter.

But neither the letters of the Pope, nor the sermons of the bishop, nor the importunities of the queen, prevailed to triumph over the doubts of Edwin. A providential event, however, occurred to shake, without absolutely convincing him. On the Easter-day after his marriage an assassin, sent by the king of the West Saxons, made his way to the king, and, under the pretext of communicating a message from his master, tried to stab him with a double-edged poisoned dagger, which he held hidden under his dress. Prompted by that heroic devotion for their princes, which among all the Germanic barbarians co-existed with con-

[1] "Gloriosam conjugem vestram, quæ vestri corporis pars esse dignoscitur, æternitatis præmio per sancti baptismatis regenerationem illuminatum."—BEDE, ii. 9.

[2] "Insiste ergo, gloriosa filia, et summis conatibus duritiam cordis . . . insinuatione mollire dematura. . . . In undens sensibus ejus . . . quantum sit admirabile quod renata præmium consequi meruisti. Frigiditatem cordis . . . succende. . . . Ut quos copulatio carnalis affectus unum quodam modo corpus exhibuisse monstratur, hos quoque unitas fidei etiam post hujus vitæ transitum in perpetua societate conservet."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

tinual revolts against them, a lord named Lilla, having no shield at hand, threw himself between his king and the assassin, who struck with such force that his weapon reached Edwin even through the body of his faithful friend.[1] The same night, the night of the greatest of Christian festivals, the queen was delivered of a daughter. While Edwin was rendering thanks to his gods for the birth of his first-born, the Bishop Paulinus began, on his part, to thank the Lord Christ, assuring the king that it was He who by His prayers to the true God had obtained that the queen should bear her first child without mishap, and almost without pain. The king, less moved by the mortal danger that he had just escaped, than by the joy of being a father without peril or hurt to his beloved Ethelburga, was charmed by the words of Paulinus, and promised to renounce his idols for the service of Christ, if Christ granted him life and victory in the war which he was about to wage against the king who had tried to procure his assassination. As a pledge of his good faith, he gave the new-born child to the bishop, that he might consecrate her to Christ. This first child of the king, the first native Christian of the Northumbrian nation,[2] was baptized on Whitsunday (Pentecost), along with eleven persons of the royal household. She was named Eanfleda, and was destined, like most of the Anglo-Saxon princesses, to exercise an influence over the destiny of her country.

Edwin came back victorious from his struggle with the guilty king. On his return to Northumbria, though since giving his promise he had ceased to worship idols, he

[1] "Missus a rege . . . nomine Cuichelmo . . . qui habebat sicam bicipitem toxicatam. . . . Minister regi amicissimus . . . non habens scutum . . . mox interposuit corpus suum ante ictum pungentis, sed tanta vi hostis ferrum infixit, ut per corpus militis occisi etiam regem vulneraret." —BEDE, *loc. cit.*

[2] "Ut regina sospes absque dolore gravi sobolem procrearet. . . . Prima de gente Nordanhymbrorum."—BEDE, *loc. cit.* She married King Oswy, one of her father's successors. We shall see her take a part in the struggle between the monastic and the Celtic influence in Northumbria.

would not at once, and without further reflection, receive the sacraments of the Christian faith. But he made Paulinus give him more fully, what Bede calls the reasons of his belief. He frequently conferred with the wisest and best instructed of his nobles upon the part which they would counsel him to take. Finally, being by nature a man sagacious and reflective, he passed long hours in solitude—his lips indeed closed, but discussing many things in the depths of his heart, and examining without intermission which religion he ought to prefer.[1]

The history of the Church, if I mistake not, offers no other example of an equally long and conscientious hesitation on the part of a pagan king. They all appear equally prompt alike for persecution or for conversion. Edwin, as the testimony of an incontestable authority reveals him to us, experienced all the humble efforts, the delicate scruples, of the modern conscience. A true priest has said with justice: "This intellectual travail of a barbarian moves and touches us. We follow with sympathy the searcher in his hesitations; we suffer in his perplexities; we feel that this soul is a sincere one, and we love it.[2]

Meanwhile Paulinus saw time passing away without the word of God which he preached being listened to, and without Edwin being able to bow the pride of his intelligence before the divine humility of the cross. Being informed of the prophecy and the promise which had put an end to the exile of the king, he believed that the moment for recalling them

[1] "Non statim et inconsulte sacramenta fidei percipere voluit. . . . Verum primo diligentius . . . rationem fidei ediscere et cum suis primatibus quos sapientiores noverat, curavit conferre, quod de his agendum arbitrarentur. Sed et ipse cum esset vir natura sagacissimus, sæpe diu solus residens, ore quidem tacito, sed in intimis cordis multa secum colloquens, quod sibi esset faciendum, quæ religio servanda tractabat."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

[2] GORINI, *Défense de l'Eglise*, vol. ii. p. 87. Nothing in this excellent work can surpass the author's refutation, step by step, of M. Augustin Thierry's narrative of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. Compare FABER, *Life of St. Edwin*, 1844, in the series of *Lives of the English Saints.*

to him had come.[1] One day when Edwin was seated by himself, meditating in the secret of his own heart upon the religion which he ought to follow, the bishop entered suddenly and placed his right hand upon his head, as the unknown had done in the vision, asking him if he recognised that sign.[2] The king, trembling, would have thrown himself at the feet of Paulinus, but he raised him up and said gently, "You are now delivered by God's goodness from the enemies that you feared. He has given you the kingdom which you desired. Remember to accomplish your third promise, which binds you to receive the faith and to keep its commandments. It is thus only that after being enriched with the divine favour here, you will be able to enter with God into the fellowship of the eternal kingdom."

"Yes," answered Edwin at length, "I feel it; I ought to be, and I will be, a Christian." But, always true to his characteristic moderation, he stipulated only for himself. He said that he would confer with his great nobles, his friends, and his councillors, in order that, if they decided to believe as he did, they should be all together consecrated to Christ in the fountain of life.

Paulinus having expressed his approval of this proposal, the Northumbrian parliament, or, as it was then called, the council of sages (*witena-gemot*), was assembled near to a sanctuary of the national worship, already celebrated in the time of the Romans and Britons, at Godmundham, hard by the gates of York. Each member of this great national council was, in his turn, asked his opinion of the new doc-

[1] According to M. Thierry, "this secret had probably escaped Edwin among the confidences of the nuptial couch." Bede says exactly the contrary, though without affirming anything. "Tandem ut verisimile videtur didicit (Paulinus) *in spiritu*, quod vel quale esset oraculum regi quondam cœlitus ostensum."—BEDE, ii. 12.

[2] "Cum videret difficulter posse sublimitatem animi regalis ad humilitatem . . . vivificæ crucis inclinari. . . . Cum horis competentibus solitarius sederet, quid agendum sibi esset, quæ religio sequenda sedulus secum ipse scrutari consuesset, ingrediens ad eum quadam die vir Dei."—*Ibid.*, ii. 12.

trine and worship.[1] The first who answered was the high priest of the idols, by name Coïfi, a singular and somewhat cynical personage. "My opinion," said he, "is most certainly that the religion which we have hitherto followed is worth nothing; and this is my reason. Not one of your subjects has served our gods with more zeal than I have, and notwithstanding, there are many of your people who have received from you far greater gifts and dignities. But if our gods were not good for nothing, they would have done something for me who have served them so well. If then, after ripe examination, you have found this new religion which is preached to us more efficacious, let us hasten to adopt it."[2]

One of the great chiefs held different language, in which are revealed to us that religious elevation and poetic melancholy wherewith the minds of these Germanic heathens were often imbued. "You remember, perhaps," said he to the king, "what sometimes happens in the winter evenings whilst you are at supper with your ealdormen and thanes;[3] while the good fire burns within, and it rains and snows, and the wind howls without, a sparrow enters at the one door and flies out quickly at the other. During that rapid passage it is sheltered from the rain and cold; but after that brief and pleasant moment it disappears, and from winter returns to winter again. Such seems to me to be the life of man, and his career but a brief moment between that which goes before and that which follows after, and of which we

[1] "Quibus auditis et rex suscipere se fidem et velle et debere respondebat. Verum adhuc cum amicis principibus, et consiliariis suis sese de hoc collaturum esse dicebat. . . . Habito enim cum sapientibus consilio, sciscitabatur singillatim ab omnibus, qualis sibi doctrina eatenus inaudita . . . videretur. . . . His similia et cæteri majores natu ac regis consiliarii prosequebantur."—BEDE, ii. 13.

[2] "Profiteor quia nihil omnino virtutis, nihil utilitatis religio illa quam hucusque tenuimus. . . . Si autem Dii aliquid valerent."—*Ibid.*

[3] "Cum ducibus ac ministris tuis." "*Mit thynem Ealdormannum and Thegnum,*" is King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon translation of the words of Bede.

know nothing. If, then, the new doctrine can teach us something certain, it deserves to be followed." [1]

After much discourse of the same tendency, for the assembly seems to have been unanimous, the high priest Coïfi spoke again with a loftier inspiration than that of his first words. He expressed the desire to hear Paulinus speak of the God whose envoy he professed to be. The bishop, with permission of the king, addressed the assembly. When he had finished, the high priest cried, "For a long time I have understood the nothingness of all that we worshipped, for the more I endeavoured to search for truth in it the less I found it; but now I declare without reserve that in this preaching I see the shining of the truth, which gives life and salvation and eternal blessedness. I vote, then, that we give up at once to fire and to the curse the altars which we have so uselessly consecrated." [2] The king immediately made a public declaration that he adhered to the gospel preached by Paulinus — that he renounced idolatry and adopted the faith of Christ. "But who," asked the king, "will be the first to overthrow the altars of the ancient gods, and to profane their sacred precincts?" "I," replied the high priest; whereupon he prayed the king to give him arms and a stallion, that he might the more thoroughly violate the rule of his order, which forbade him to carry arms and to mount aught but a mare. Mounted on the king's steed, girt with a sword, and lance in hand, he galloped towards the idols, and in the sight of all the people, who believed him to be beside himself, he dashed his lance into the interior of their temple. The profaning steel buried itself in the wall; to the surprise of the spectators, the gods were silent, and the sacrilege remained unpunished. Then the people, at the

[1] "Alius optimatum regis subdidit: Talis mihi videtur, rex, vita hominum . . . quale cum te residente ad cœnam accenso foco in media et calido effecto cœnaculo . . . adveniens unus passerum domum citissime pervolaverit . . . mox de hieme in hiemem regrediens."—BEDE, ii. 13.

[2] "Unde suggero, o rex, ut templa et altaria quæ sine fructu utilitatis sacravimus ocius anathemati et igni contradamus."—*Ibid.*, ii. 3.

command of the high priest, proceeded to overthrow and burn the temple.[1]

These things occurred in the eleventh year of Edwin's reign. The whole Northumbrian nobility and a large part of the people followed the example of the king, who was baptized with much solemnity on Easter-day (627) by Paulinus at York, in a wooden church, built in haste while the catechumens were prepared for baptism.[2] Immediately afterwards he built around this improvised sanctuary a large church in stone, which he had not time to finish, but which has since become the splendid Minster of York, and the metropolitan church of the north of England. The town of York had been already celebrated in the times of the Romans. The Emperor Severus and the father of Constantine had died there. The Northumbrians had made it their capital, and Edwin there placed the seat of the episcopate filled by his teacher Paulinus. Thus was realised the grand design of Gregory, who, thirty years before, at the commencement of the English mission, had instructed Augustin to send a bishop to York, and to invest him with the jurisdiction of metropolitan over the twelve suffragan bishoprics which in imagination he already saw founded in the north of the country conquered by the Anglo-Saxons.[3]

The king and the bishop laboured together for six years for the conversion of the Northumbrian people, and even of the English population of the neighbouring regions. The chiefs of the nobility and the principal servants of the king were the first to receive baptism, together with the sons of

[1] "Ille respondit: Ego. . . . Rogavit sibi regem arma dare et equum emissarium quem ascendens . . . pergebat ad idola."—BEDE, ii. 3. Compare the Saxon version quoted by Lingard, i. 30.

[2] "Accepit rex cum cunctis gentis suæ nobilibus ac plebe perplurima fidem et lavacrum. . . . Ipse doctori et antistiti suo Paulino sedem episcopatus donavit. . . . Baptizatus est ibi sed et alii nobiles et regii viri non pauci."—BEDE, ii. 14.

[3] "Qui tuæ subjaceant ditioni . . . ita duntaxat ut si eadem civitas cum finitimis locis verbum Dei receperit, ipse quoque XII episcopos ordinet, et metropolitani honore perfruatur."—*Ibid.*, i. 29.

Edwin's first marriage. The example of a king was, however, far from being enough, among the Anglo-Saxons, to determine the conversion of a whole people; and the first Christian king and the first bishop of Northumbria did not, any more than Ethelbert and Augustin, think of employing undue constraint. Doubtless it required more than one effort on their part to overcome the roughness, the ignorance, the indifference of the heathen Saxons. But they had, at the same time, much encouragement, for the fervour of the people and their anxiety for baptism were often wonderful. Paulinus having gone with the king and queen, who several times accompanied him on his missions, to a royal villa far to the north, they remained there, all three, for thirty-six days together, and during the whole of that time the bishop did nothing else from morning till night than catechise the crowds that gathered from all the villages around, and afterwards baptize them in the river which flowed close by. At the opposite extremity of the country, to the south, the name of Jordan is still given to a portion of the course of the river Derwent, near the old Roman ford of Malton, in memory of the numerous subjects of Edwin that were there baptized by the Roman missionary.[1] Everywhere he baptized in the rivers or streams, for there was no time to build churches.[2] However, he built, near Edwin's principal palace, a stone church, whose calcined ruins were still visible after the Reformation, as well as a large cross, with this inscription: *Paulinus hic prædicavit et celebravit.*[3]

Passing the frontiers of the Northumbrian kingdom, Paulinus continued his evangelistic course among the Angles settled to the south of the Humber, in the mari-

[1] *The Times* of 17th March 1865.

[2] The Glen in Northumberland, the Swale, and especially the Derwent, in Yorkshire, are still mentioned among the rivers in which the bishop baptized thousands of converts by immersion.

[3] At Dewsbury, on the banks of the Calder. ALFORD, *Annales Anglo-Saxonicæ*, ap. BOLLAND., vol. vi. Oct., p. 118.

time province of Lindsay. There also he baptized many people in the Trent; and long afterwards, old men, who had in their childhood received baptism at his hands, recalled with reverent tenderness the venerable and awe-inspiring stranger, whose lofty and stooping form, black hair, aquiline nose, and emaciated but imposing features, impressed themselves on every beholder, and proclaimed his southern origin.[1] The beautiful monastic church of Southwell consecrates the memory of the scene of one of those multitudinous baptisms; and it is to the mission of Bishop Paulinus on this side the Humber that we trace the foundation of that magnificent Cathedral of Lincoln, which rivals our noble Cathedral of Laon in its position, and even surpasses it in grandeur, and perhaps in beauty.[2]

It was in the stone church (Bede always notes this detail most carefully) built by Paulinus at Lincoln, after the conversion of the chief Saxon of that town, with all his house, that the metropolitan Bishop of York had to proceed to the consecration of the fourth successor of Augustin in the metropolitan see of Canterbury. Honorius was, like Paulinus, a monk of Mount Cœlius at Rome, and one of the first companions of St. Augustin in his mission to England. He was a disciple of St. Gregory, and had learned from the great pontiff the art of music, and it was he who led the choir of monks on the occasion of the first entrance of the missionaries, thirty years before, at Canterbury.[3] The Pope then reigning was also named Honorius, first of that name. He sent the *pallium* to each of the two metropolitans, and ordained that when God should take to Himself one of the

[1] "Quemdam seniorem . . . baptizatum a Paulino . . . præsente rege Adwino. . . . Quoniam effigiem ejusdem Paulini referre esset solitus. . . . Vir longæ staturæ, paululum incurvus, nigro capillo, facie macilenta, naso adunco perenni, venerabilis simul et terribilis aspectu."—BEDE, ii. 16.

[2] All the most beautiful religious edifices of England—York, Lincoln, and Southwell—trace their origin to the episcopate of Paulinus.—FABER, *op. cit.*

[3] HOOK, *Lives of the Archbishops*, pp. 53, 111.

two, the other should appoint a successor, in order to avoid the delay of a reference to Rome, so difficult by reason of the great distance to be travelled by sea and land. In the eloquent letter which accompanied the *pallium*, he reminds the new archbishop that the great Pope Gregory had been his master, and should ever be his model, and that the whole work of the archbishops, his predecessors, had been but the fruit of the zeal of that incomparable pontiff.[1]

The Pope wrote also to King Edwin to congratulate him on his conversion and on the ardour and sincerity of his faith, and to exhort him to read much in the works of St. Gregory, whom he calls the Preacher of the English, and whom he recommends the king to take for his perpetual intercessor with God.[2] But when this letter reached England, Edwin was no more.

The six years which passed between his conversion and his death may certainly be reckoned among the most glorious and happy that it was ever given to any Anglo-Saxon prince to know. He speedily raised Northumbria to the head of the Heptarchy. On the south, his ardent zeal for the faith which he had embraced after such ripe reflection extended its influence even to the populations which, without being subjected to his direct authority, yet belonged to the same race as his subjects. The East Angles, as we have seen, had offered him their crown, and he had refused it. But he

[1] "Dilectissimo fratri Honorio Honorius. . . . Exoramus ut vestram dilectionem in prædicatione Evangelii laborantem et fructificantem sectantemque magistri et capitis sui sancti Gregorii regulam perpeti stabilitate confirmet (redemptor) . . . ut fide et opere, in timore Dei et caritate, vestra adquisitio decessorumque vestrorum quæ per Domini Gregorii exordia pullulata convalescendo amplius extendatur . . . longa terrarum marisque intervalla, quæ inter nos ac vos obsistunt, ac et nos condescendere coegerunt, ut nulla possit ecclesiarum vestrarum jactura per cujuslibet occasionis obtentum quoque modo provenire : sed potius commissi vobis populi devotionem plenius propagare."—Ap. BEDAM, ii. 18.

[2] "Prædicatores vestri . . . Gregorii frequenter lectione occupati, præ oculis affectum doctrinæ ipsius, quam pro vestris animabus libenter exercuit, habetote : quatenus ejus oratio, et regnum vestrum populumque augeat, et vos omnipotenti Deo irreprehensibiles repræsentet."—*Ibid.*, ii. 17.

used his influence over the young king, who owed to him his elevation to the throne, to induce him to embrace the Christian religion, with all his subjects. Eordwald thus expiated the apostasy of his father; and Edwin thus paid the ransom of the generous pity that the royalty of East Anglia had lavished on his youth and his exile.

On the north he extended and consolidated the Anglo-Saxon dominion as far as the isthmus which separated Caledonia from Britain. And he has left an ineffaceable record of his reign in the name of the fortress built upon the rock which commanded the entrance of the Forth, and which still lifts its sombre and alpine front—true Acropolis of the barbarous north—from the midst of the great and picturesque city of Edinburgh (*Edwin's burgh*).

On the west he continued, with less ferocity than Ethelfrid, but with no less valour and success, the contest with the Britons of Wales. He pursued them even into the islands of the channel which separates Great Britain from Ireland; and took possession of the Isle of Man and another isle which had been the last refuge of the Druids from the Roman dominion, and which, after its conquest by Edwin, took the name of the victorious race, *Angles-ey*.

Within his own kingdom he secured a peace and security so unknown both before and after his reign that it passed into a proverb; it was said that in the time of Edwin a woman with her new-born child might traverse England from the Irish Channel to the North Sea without meeting any one who would do her the least wrong. It is pleasant to trace his kindly and minute care of the well-being of his subjects in such a particular as that of the copper cups which he had suspended beside the fountains on the highways, that the passers-by might drink at their ease, and which no one attempted to steal, whether from fear or from love of the king. Neither did any one ever reproach him for the unwonted pomp which distinguished his train, not only when he went out to war, but when he rode peacefully through his towns

and provinces, on which occasions the lance surmounted with a large tuft of feathers [1]—which the Saxons had borrowed from the Roman legions, and which they had made the sacred standard of the Bretwalda and the ensign of the supreme sovereignty in their confederation—was always carried before him in the midst of his military banners.

But all this grandeur and prosperity were about to be engulfed in a sudden and great calamity.

There were other Angles than those who, in Northumbria and East Anglia, were already subdued and humanised by the influence of Christianity; there remained the Angles of Mercia—the great central region stretching from the Humber to the Thames. The kingdom of Mercia was the last state organised out of the Anglo-Saxon conquest. It had been founded by that portion of the invaders who, finding all the eastern and southern shores of the island already occupied, were compelled to advance into the interior. It became the centre of the pagan resistance to, and occasional assaults upon, the Christian *Propaganda*, which was henceforth to have its headquarters in Northumbria. The pagans of Mercia found a formidable leader in the person of Penda, who was himself of royal extraction, or, as it was then believed, of the blood of Odin, and had reigned for twenty-two years, but who was inflamed by all the passions of a barbarian, and, above all, devoured with jealousy of the fortunes of Edwin and the power of the Northumbrians. Since Edwin's conversion these wild instincts were intensified by fanaticism. Penda and the Mercians remained faithful to the worship of Odin, whose descendants all the Saxon kings believed themselves to be. Edwin and the Northumbrians were, therefore, in their eyes no better than traitors and apostates. But more surprising still, the original inhabi-

[1] "Sicut usque hodie in proverbio dicitur, etiamsi mulier una cum recens nato parvulo vellet totam perambulare insulam a mari ad mare, nullo se lædente valeret. . . . Erectis stipitibus æreos caucos suspendi juberet. . . . Illud genus vexilli quod Romani *Tufam*, Angli vero *Tuuf* appellant."—BEDE, ii. 16.

tants of the island, the Christian Britons, who were more numerous in Mercia than in any other Anglo-Saxon kingdom, shared and excited the hatred of the pagan Saxons against the converts of the same race. These old Christians, it cannot be too often repeated, always exasperated against the invaders of their island, took no account of the faith of the converted Angles, and would not on any terms hold communion with them.[1] The Welsh Britons, who maintained their independence, but who, for more than a century, had been constantly menaced, defeated, and humiliated by Ida, Ethelfrid, and Edwin, professed and nourished their antipathy with even greater bitterness.[2] Their chief, Caedwalla or Cadwallon, the last hero of the Celtic race in Britain, at first overcome by Edwin and forced to seek refuge in Ireland and in Armorica,[3] had returned thence with rage redoubled, and with auxiliaries from the other Celtic races, to recommence the struggle against the Northumbrians. He succeeded in forming an alliance with Penda against the common enemy. Under these two chiefs an immense army, in which the British Christians of Wales jostled the pagans of Mercia, invaded Northumbria. Edwin awaited them at Hatfield, on the southern frontier of his kingdom. He was there disastrously defeated, and perished gloriously, sword in hand, scarce forty-eight years of age, dying a death which entitled him to be ranked amongst the martyrs.[4] His eldest son fell with him; the younger, taken prisoner by Penda, who swore to preserve his life, was infamously murdered. Northumbria was ravaged with fire and sword, and its recent Christianity completely obliterated. The most barbarous of the persecutors was not the idolatrous Penda, but the Christian Cadwallon, who, during a whole year, went up and down all the Northumbrian provinces

[1] BEDE, ii. 20. See *ante*, vol. ii. p. 419, note.

[2] LAPPENBERG, vol. i. p. 159. LA BORDERIE, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

[3] See his amusing adventures in RICHARD OF CIRENCESTER, vol. ii. p. 32.

[4] *Act. SS. Bolland.*, die 12 Octobris.

massacring every man he met, and subjecting even the women and children to atrocious tortures before putting them to death. He was, says Bede, resolved to extirpate from the soil of Britain the English race, whose recent reception of Christianity only inspired this old Christian, intoxicated with blood and with a ferocious patriotism, with scorn and disgust.[1]

It is not known why Northumbria, after the death of Edwin and his son, was not subjugated and shared among the conquerors; but it remained divided, enslaved, and plunged once more into paganism. Deïra fell to Osric, cousin-german of Edwin; Bernicia to Eanfrid, one of the sons of Ethelfrid, who had returned from his exile in Scotland. Both had received baptism: the one with his cousin at York; the other at the hands of the Celtic monks of Iona. But a pagan reaction was the inevitable consequence of the overthrow of the first Christian king of Northumbria. The two princes yielded to that reaction, and renounced their baptism, but without gaining anything thereby. The king of Deïra was killed in battle with the Britons; and the king of Bernicia was murdered at an interview which he had sought with the savage Cadwallon.

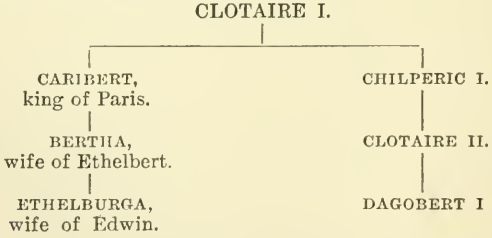
Bishop Paulinus did not consider himself called upon to remain a witness of such horrors. His one thought was to place in safety the widow of King Edwin—that gentle Ethelburga who had been confided to him by her brother for a different destiny: he brought her back by sea to her brother's kingdom, with the daughter and the two youngest sons whom she had borne to Edwin. Even beside her

[1] "Maxima est facta strages in Ecclesia vel gente Nordanhymbrorum. . . . Unus ex ducibus paganus, alter . . . pagano sævior. . . . Quamvis nomen et professionem haberet Christiani, adeo animo et moribus barbarus, ut ne sexui muliebri vel innocuæ parvulorum parceret ætati, quum universos atrocitate ferina morti per tormenta contraderet. . . . Totum genus Anglorum Britanniæ finibus erasurum se esse deliberans; sed nec religioni Christianæ quæ apud eos exorta erat, aliquid impendebat honoris."—BEDE, ii. 20. Compare iii. 1.

brother, the king of Kent, she was afraid to keep them in England; and, wishing to devote her own widowhood to God, she entrusted them to the king of the Franks, Dagobert, her cousin,[1] at whose court they died at an early age. As to Paulinus, who had left in charge of his church at York only a brave Italian deacon, of whom we shall speak hereafter, he found the episcopal see of Rochester vacant in consequence of the death of the Roman monk who was the titular bishop, and who, sent by the primate to the Pope, had just been drowned in the Mediterranean. Paulinus was invested with this bishopric by the king and by the archbishop Honorius, whom he had himself consecrated at Lincoln; and there he died, far from his native land, after having laboured during forty-three years for the conversion of the English.

Thus appeared to crumble away in one day and for ever, along with the military and political pre-eminence of Northumbria, the edifice so laboriously raised in the north of England by the noble and true-hearted Edwin, the gentle and devoted Ethelburga, the patient and indefatigable Paulinus, and by so many efforts and sacrifices known to God alone. The last and most precious of Edwin's conquests was not destined to survive him long. His young kinsman, the king of the East Angles, was no sooner con-

[1] The following is the table of the relationship between the queen of Northumbria and the king of Austrasia :—



Dagobert mounted the throne of Austrasia in 628, three years after Ethelburga's marriage.

verted than he fell beneath the poignard of an assassin; and, like Northumbria, East Anglia relapsed altogether into the night of idolatry.[1]

After thirty-six years of continual efforts, the monastic missionaries sent by St Gregory the Great had succeeded in establishing nothing, save in the petty kingdom of Kent. Everywhere else they had been baffled. Of the six other kingdoms of the Heptarchy, three—those of the Saxons of the South and of the West, and the Angles of the Centre[2]—remained inaccessible to them. The three last—those of the Saxons of the East, of the Angles of the East and North[3]—had successively escaped from them. And yet, except the supernatural courage which courts or braves martyrdom, no virtue seems to have been awanting to them. No accusation, no suspicion, impugns their all-prevailing charity, the fervent sincerity of their faith, the irreproachable purity of their morals, the unwearying activity, the constant self-denial, and austere piety of their whole life.

How, then, are we to explain their defeat, and the successive failure of their laborious efforts? Perhaps they were wrong in not sufficiently following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles—in not preaching enough to the humble and poor—in not defying with proper boldness the wrath of the great and powerful. Perhaps they were wrong in addressing themselves too exclusively to the kings and warlike chiefs, and in undertaking nothing, risking nothing, without the concurrence, or against the will, of the secular power.[4] Hence, without doubt, these changes of fortune, these reactions, and sudden and complete relapses into idolatry, which followed the death of their first protectors; hence, also, these fits of timidity, of discouragement, and despair, into which we see them falling

[1] BEDE, ii. 15.
[2] Wessex, Sussex, Mercia.
[3] Essex, East Anglia, Northumbria.
[4] LINGARD, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. pp. 40, 74.

under the pressure of the sudden changes and mistakes of their career. Perhaps, in short, they had not at first understood the national character of the Anglo-Saxons, and did not know how to gain and to master their minds, by reconciling their own Italian customs and ideas with the roughness, the independence, and the manly energy of the populations of the German race.

At all events, it is evident that new blood was needed to infuse new life into the scattered and imperfect germs of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, and to continue and carry out the work of the missionary monks of Mount Cœlius.

These monks will always have the glory of having first approached, broken, and thrown seed upon this fertile but rebellious soil. Others must water with the sweat of their toil the fields that they have prepared, and gather the harvest they have sown. But the sons of St. Gregory will none the less remain before God and man the first labourers in the conversion of the English people. And, at the same time, they did not desert their post. Like mariners entrenched in a fort built in haste on the shore that they would fain have conquered, they concentrated their strength in their first and indestructible foundations at Canterbury, in the metropolitan monastery of Christ Church and the monastery *extra muros* of St. Augustin, and there maintained the storehouse of Roman traditions and of the Benedictine rule, along with that citadel of apostolic authority which was for centuries the heart and head of Catholic England.

BOOK XI

THE CELTIC MONKS AND THE ANGLO-SAXONS

CHAPTER I

ST. OSWALD AND THE REVIVAL OF CHRISTIANITY IN NORTHUMBRIA

The Celtic monks revive, in Northumbria, the work of conversion abandoned by the Roman monks.—Oswald, son of Ethelfrid the Ravager, an exile among the Scots, is baptized according to the Celtic rite.—He returns to Northumbria, plants there the first cross, and gains the battle of Denisesburn over the Mercians and Britons.—He reigns over the whole of Northumbria, and makes it the predominant power in the Anglo-Saxon Confederation.—His desire to convert his kingdom to Christ.—The Italian deacon, James, keeps Christianity alive in Deïra; but in Bernicia everything has yet to be.—Oswald begs for missionaries from the Celtic monasteries.—Failure of the first missionary from Iona: he is succeeded by Aïdan.—Bede's Eulogy of the Abbots of Iona.—The religious capital of the North of England is fixed in the monastic isle of Lindisfarne: description of that island: its resemblance to Iona.—Authority of the abbots of Lindisfarne even over the bishops.—Virtues of the monk-bishop Aïdan: his disinterestedness: his care of children and slaves.—King Oswald acts as assistant and interpreter to the missionary Aïdan.—Oswald marries the daughter of the king of Wessex, and converts his father-in-law.—Note regarding the local and provincial opposition of the monks of Bardeney.—War with Penda, chief of the coalition of the Britons and Mercians.—Battle of Maserfeld: Oswald is killed there at the age of thirty-eight.—Venerated as a martyr.—Miracles wrought at his tomb.—Prediction of Bishop Aïdan with regard to his hand.

The work of conversion among the English, though interrupted in the south by a pagan reaction, and buried, in the north, on the overthrow of the first Christian king of Northumbria, was to undergo but a momentary eclipse—the providential prelude of a more sustained effort and decisive triumph. The spiritual conquest of the island, abandoned for a time by the Roman missionaries, was now

about to be taken up by the Celtic monks. The Italians had made the first step, and the Irish now appeared to resume the uncompleted work. What the sons of St. Benedict could only begin, was to be completed by the sons of St. Columba. The great heart of the first abbot of Iona, inspiring his spiritual descendants, was thus to accomplish the noble design of the holy Gregory. The spirit of unity, submission, and discipline, was to be instilled into their minds, somewhat against their will, by Wilfrid, a Saxon convert; and their unwearied activity and invincible perseverance were destined to triumph over every obstacle, stimulating and seconding the zeal of the Italian missionaries and reviving the sacred fire amongst the Benedictine monks, into whose ranks they finally fell. Thus wrought upon, moulded and penetrated on every side by monastic influence, the whole nation of the Anglo-Saxons was soon to acknowledge the law of Christ. Its kings, its monks, its bishops and saints, were to take a foremost place among the children of the Church, the civilisers of Europe, the benefactors of mankind, and the soldiers of the Cross. The history of this transformation we shall attempt to set forth in the narrative which follows.

Forty-eight years after Augustin and his Roman monks landed on the shores of pagan England, an Anglo-Saxon prince invoked the aid of the monks of Iona in the conversion of the Saxons of the north.

This prince was Oswald, son of Ethelfrid the Ravager, and of the sister of the martyred King Edwin. After the defeat and death of his father, the son of the great enemy and conqueror of the Scots had, while yet a child, sought a refuge, along with his brothers and a numerous train of young nobles, among the Scots themselves. He there found the same generous hospitality which, twelve centuries later, the descendants of the Anglo-Saxons showed to the French princes, descendants of a race continually and gloriously hostile to England. In that exile he passed the seventeen

years of the reign of his uncle Edwin, as Edwin himself had lived in exile during the reign of his brother-in-law and persecutor Ethelfrid. But between these two representatives of the two dynasties which divided Northumbria, and succeeded each other in the sovereignty, there was this difference, that the young Edwin had sought and found an asylum among his pagan fellow-countrymen; while the banishment of Oswald led him into intercourse with a people of a race and religion differing from his own. Since the apostolate of Columba, the Scots and Picts had become entirely Christian; and among them Oswald and his companions in misfortune learned the truths of Christianity, and were all baptized, but according to the rite of the Celtic Church, which differed from the Roman.[1]

After the overthrow of Edwin and the Deïrian dynasty, of which he was the head, the princes of the Bernician family returned to Northumbria, from which they had been banished for seventeen years.[2]

The elder, Eanfrid, as has been stated, fell by the sword of the Briton Cadwallon, after having renounced the Christian faith. But his younger brother Oswald was a man of a very different stamp. At the head of a small but resolute band, of whom a dozen at most were Christians like himself, he undertook to reconquer his country, and did not hesitate to carry on the struggle against the immense forces of the formidable Briton, nor even to attack him in pitched battle.

[1] "Filii præfati regis . . . cum magna nobilium juventute apud Scotos sive Pictos exulabant ibique ad doctrinam Scotorum catechizati et baptismatis sunt gratia recreati."—BEDE, iii. 1.

Fleury, Lanigan, and many other historians, have supposed that these expressions of Bede applied to the Irish, who, as we have seen above, bore the name of Scots long before that name had been communicated, by an Irish colony, to the inhabitants of Caledonia. But no valid proof is to be found in ancient authors to confirm this supposition.

[2] To help the reader to find his way through the labyrinth of the two Northumbrian dynasties, the history of which, here begun, will be largely followed up in this volume, we add, in Appendix A., a genealogical table, to which he will do well to make frequent reference.

The two armies, so unequal in numbers, met near that great wall which the Emperor Severus had erected from sea to sea to keep back the Picts, and which divided Northumbria into two nearly equal parts. This rampart, which had neither restrained the Picts in their invasions of the South, nor the Saxons in their conquests to the north, was then, though not intact, still standing; as indeed even now its vast remains may be traced on the steep hill-tops and uplands, covered with heath or strewn with basalt rocks, which give to that district of England an aspect so different from that of her ordinary landscapes. Flanked by a fragment of the Roman wall, the Anglo-Saxon prince occupied a height where his feeble forces could defy the attack of the numerous battalions of Cadwallon.[1] On that height, which was afterwards called *Heaven's Field*,[2] and which still bears the name of St. Oswald, on the eve of the day of decisive battle, the young and ardent warrior held erect with his own hands a large wooden cross, which had been hastily made by his orders, while his companions heaped the earth round it, to keep it firm in its position; then prostrating himself before it, he said to his brothers in arms, "Let us all fall on our knees, and together implore the living and true and Almighty God in His mercy to defend us against the pride and fierceness of our enemy; for that God knows our cause is just, and that we fight for the salvation of our nation. Yes, it is for our salvation

[1] See for the description of the battle-field a recent publication of the learned society which, under the name of a famous archæologist, Surtees, has for thirty years devoted itself to bringing to light the monuments of Northumbrian history, viz., *The Priory of Hexham*, edited by JAMES RAINE, 1864; vol. i., preface, page xi., and app. ii.

[2] "Vocatur locus ille in lingua Anglorum *Hefenfelth*, quod dici potest latine Cœlestis Campus."—BEDE, iii. 1. A chapel dedicated to St. Oswald marks the spot so well described by Bede, near the small town of the same name, a little to the north of Hexham and of the railway from Newcastle to Carlisle. The battle is known by the name of *Denisesburn*, from the brook on the bank of which the British king perished in his flight.

and our freedom that we must fight to-day against those Britons, whom our fathers gloried in challenging, but who now prophesy the extirpation of our race." [1]

The Britons themselves might seem to have an equal right to offer this prayer, for they had long been Christians, and after all had only retaken their native soil from the grasp of foreign invaders.[2] But a century of possession had given the latter a conviction of their right; and the bloody cruelties of Cadwallon had dishonoured his patriotism. Oswald, moreover, represented the cause of advancing Christianity; for the Britons did nothing to convert their enemies, and the cross which he planted was the first which had been as yet seen in Bernicia.

On the evening of the same day, and during the night which preceded the contest which was to fix his destiny, Oswald, asleep in his tent, saw in a dream the holy St. Columba, the apostle and patron of the country of his exile and of the Church in which he had received his baptism. The warlike abbot of Iona, who had been dead for thirty-six years, appeared to him, shining with an angelic beauty; erect, and with that lofty stature that distinguished him in life, he stood and stretched his resplendent robe over the whole of the small army of exiles as if to protect it;

[1] "Fertur quia facta cruce citato opere ac fovea præparata, ipse fide fervens hanc arripuerit ac foveæ imposuerit, atque utraque manu erectam tenuerit, donec, adgesto a militibus pulvere, terræ figeretur. . . . Flectamus omnes genua et Dominum omnipotentem vivum ac verum in commune deprecemur, ut nos ab hoste superbo et feroce sua miseratione defendat; scit enim ipse quia justa pro salute gentis nostræ bella suscepimus."—BEDE, iii. 2. The more recent historians throw especial light on the patriotic side of this struggle. "Exprobrandi pudoris rem ventilari allegans, Anglos cum Britannis tam iniquo marte confligere, ut contra illos pro salute decertarent quos ultro *pro gloria* consueverunt lacessere. Itaque pro libertate audentibus animis et viribus effusis decertarent, nihil de fuga meditantes: tali modo et illis provenire gloriam et annuente Deo patriæ libertatem. . . . Cædwallum, virum, ut ipse dictitabat, in exterminium Anglorum natum."—WILH. MALMESB., i. 44; RICARD. DE CIRENC., *Spcct. Hist. de Gest. Reg. Angl.*, ii. 36.

[2] A. DE LA BORDERIE, *Lutte des Britons Insulaires*, p. 221.

then addressing the prince, he said, as God said to Joshua before the passage of the Jordan, "Be of good courage and play the man. At the break of day march to the battle: I have obtained for thee from God the victory over thine enemies and the death of tyrants: thou shalt conquer, and reign." The prince, on awaking, told his vision to the Saxons who had joined him, and all promised to receive baptism, like himself and the twelve companions of his exile, if he should return a conqueror.[1] Early on the morrow the battle began, and Oswald gained a victory as complete as it was unlikely. Cadwallon, the last hero of the British race—victor, according to the Welsh tradition, in forty battles and in sixty single combats—perished in this defeat. The Britons evacuated Northumbria never to return, and withdrew behind the Severn. Those who remained to the north of the Dee, in the territory which has since been divided into the counties of Chester, Lancaster, and Westmoreland, submitted to the Northumbrian sway, which henceforth extended from the Irish Channel to the North Sea, tracing the line of the east coast as far as Edinburgh. There still remained, however, out of Wales and to the south of the wall of Severus, in the region adjoining Caledonia, a district bathed by the waters of the Solway, full of lakes and hills like Caledonia itself, and then, as now, known by the name of Cumbria or Cumberland,

[1] "Pridie . . . in suo papilione supra pulvillum dormiens, sanctum Columbam in visu videt forma coruscantem angelica; cujus alta proceritas vertice nubes tangere videbatur . . . suum regi proprium revelans nomen, in medio castrorum stans, excepta quadam parva extremitate, sui protegebat fulgida veste. . . . Confortare et age viriliter, ecce ego tecum: hac sequente nocte de castris ad bellum procede; hac enim vice mihi Dominus donavit ut hostes in fugam vertantur tui. . . . Totus populus promittit se post reversionem de bello crediturum et baptismum suscepturum, nam tota illa Saxonia gentilitatis et ignorantiæ tenebris obscurata erat, excepto ipso rege Oswaldo, cum duodecim viris, qui cum eo Scotos inter exulante, baptizati sunt."—ADAMNAN, *Vita S. Columbæ*, v. 1. He obtained this fact from his predecessor at Iona, the Abbot Failbe, who had heard it told by Oswald himself to the fifth abbot of Iona.

where the Britons continued independent, relying on the support of the Scots, and in alliance with the people of their own race who dwelt on the banks of the Clyde. But they fell, and, though subdued, agreed in bestowing upon the son of the Ravager—the grandson of the Burner—the Saxon who had nobly vanquished them, the name of *Lamn-Gwinn;* which means, according to some, "the Shining Sword," according to others, "the Liberal Hand." [1]

Nothing is known of the course of events which, after the defeat and death of the great British chief, confirmed Oswald in the undisputed sovereignty of the whole of Northumbria and the temporary supremacy of the entire Saxon Heptarchy; but we find him entitled Emperor of all Britain by a writer almost contemporary with himself.[2] Not only, says Bede, had he learned to possess in hope the heavenly kingdom which his forefathers knew not; but in this world God gave him a kingdom vaster than that possessed by any of his ancestors. He reigned over the four races who shared Britain among them—the Britons, the Scots, the Picts, and the Angles.[3] No doubt this supremacy was but partially acknowledged, especially beyond the limits of the Anglo-Saxon territory; but Northumbria, when united under one king, could not fail to become at once the chief power of the confederation. Oswald, who was the great-grandson of Ina on his father's side, and grandson of Ella on his mother's,[4] had a natural right to unite the two realms of Deïra and Bernicia, while at the same time delivering them from the humiliating and bloody yoke of the Britons and Mercians. He seems to have had a special affection for Bernicia, his

[1] A. DE LA BORDERIE, *op. cit.* LAPPENBERG, p. 157.

[2] Cumineus, half a century prior to Bede, says, in his *Life of Columba*, c. 25—"Totius Britanniæ imperator a Deo ordinatur."

[3] "Non solum incognita progenitoribus suis regna cœlorum sperare didicit; sed et . . . omnes provincias et nationes Britanniæ, quæ in quatuor linguas, id est Britonum, Pictorum, Scotorum, et Anglorum, divisæ sunt, in ditione accepit."—BEDE, iii. 6.

[4] See the genealogical table, Appendix A.

father's country, in which he lived, and whose ancient boundaries on the Caledonian side he extended or re-established. But he succeeded, we are told by the Northumbrian Bede, in reconciling and binding into one state the two tribes which, although of the same race, had lived in continual conflict. He made of the two a real nation.[1]

Oswald was the sixth of the great chiefs or suzerains of the confederation who bore the title of *Bretwalda*,[2] before whom was carried the *tufa*, or tuft of feathers, which was the emblem of supreme authority, and which after this was used by none save by the Northumbrian kings. It is supposed that this dignity was conferred or ratified by the suffrage, not only of all the kings of the Heptarchy, but also of the principal chiefs or barons of each tribe. It was at first exclusively military; but it became under Oswald and his successors, as it had already been with Ethelbert of Kent, a means of exercising great influence in religious matters. For Oswald was not only a true king and a gallant soldier, but also a good Christian, destined to become a saint; and in the power with which he found himself invested he saw chiefly the means of defending and propagating the faith which he had received with his baptism from the hands of the sons of Columba.

As soon as Oswald was established on his father's throne,

[1] "Hujus industria regis, Deirorum et Berniciorum provinciæ, quæ eatenus ab invicem discedebant, in unam sunt pacem et velut unum compaginatæ in populum."—*Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 6.

[2] The list of the Bretwaldas as given by Bede (ii. 5) may be quoted here :—

560. Ella, King of the South Saxons.
579. Peawlin, King of the West Saxons.
596. Ethelbert, King of the Jutes of Kent.
616. Redwald, King of the East Angles.
630. Edwin, King of the Northumbrians, or Northern Angles.
635. Oswald, King of the Northumbrians.
642. Oswy, King of the Northumbrians.

To this list Lappenberg thinks should be added the name of Wulphere, King of the Mercians, or Angles of the Middle, from 656 to 675.

his first and dearest thought was to bring back and to procure the triumph in his own country of that religion which had been the consolation of his exile. For this end missionaries, ministers of the word of God, were necessary above all things. It did not occur to him to seek them in the Church of Canterbury, the monastic centre which already existed on English soil, and whence ten years before had come Paulinus, the first apostle of Northumbria. He does not seem to have even thought of the noble and worthy Roman deacon, James, whom Paulinus, on abandoning his metropolitan see of York, had left alone behind him; and who, remaining gallantly at his post during the storm of invasion and havoc, had continued to baptize and preach, and to snatch his prey from the old enemy.[1] This deacon, however, was the lieutenant of a bishop to some extent identified with the Deïrian dynasty, and the family of King Edwin, which had exiled, robbed, and supplanted the family of Oswald, and which he had just supplanted in his turn. Was it for this reason, as has been supposed,[2] that Oswald sought no aid from the Roman missionaries? Is it not more natural to conclude that he was chiefly influenced by his remembrance of the generous hospitality which he had found among the Scots, and of the instructions of those from whom in early manhood he received baptism and the other sacraments of the Church? Be this as it may, it was to the Scotic Church that he addressed himself—that is to say, to the heads of monasteries ruled by the traditions and institutions of Columba, that great abbot of Iona who appeared to him in his dream the night before the decisive battle, to promise him a victory and a crown.[3]

[1] "Virum utique industrium ac nobilem in Christo et Ecclesia . . . virum utique ecclesiasticum et sanctum, qui multo ex hinc tempore in ecclesia manens, magnas antiquo hosti prædas, docendo et baptizando, eripuit."—BEDE, ii. 16, 20.

[2] VARIN.—FABER, *Life of St. Oswald.*

[3] "Mox ubi regnum suscepit, desiderans to tamgentem Christianæ fidei gratia imbui. . . . Misit ad majores natos Scotorum, inter quos exsulans

Under the influence of that Celtic patriotism which inflamed the Britons against the conquering strangers, and which was no less unwilling to concede to them a share in eternal salvation than in the British soil, the Scotic or Irish Church seems up to this time to have refrained from all effort to spread the Gospel among the Saxons. But the time had come to adopt a different course. As though it had only awaited the signal given by Oswald, the Celtic Church, aided by the brave missionaries who sprang from that monastic reformation of which Iona was the centre, immediately began to light up with its radiance the whole northern region of Saxon Britain, from whence it went on into the territory where it had been preceded by the Roman missionaries, and where the two apostolic agencies finally met.[1]

The Scottish monks replied with heartiness to the appeal of the exile, now a conqueror and sovereign. But the first effort of their zeal was not fortunate. Their first representative seems to have been animated by that spirit of pedantic rigour, by that stubborn and intolerant austerity, which have often shown themselves in the national character of the Scots along with Christian devotion and self-denial, and which culminated in the too celebrated Puritans. This missionary, by name Corman, attempted in vain to preach the Gospel to the Northumbrians, who heard him with opposition and dislike. After some time he returned to Iona; and in rendering an account of his mission to those who had sent him—that is to say, to the elders of the monastery—he declared that he could make nothing of the Angles, that they were a race of untamable savages, and of a stubborn and barbarous spirit. This report greatly disquieted and perplexed the fathers of the synod, who ardently desired to

ipse baptismatis sacramenta cum his qui secum erant militibus, consecutus erat, petens, ut cujus doctrina ac ministerio gens quam regebat Anglorum dominicæ fidei et dona disceret et susciperet sacramenta."—BEDE, iii. 3.

[1] VARIN, Deuxième Mémoire, p. 9.

impart to the English people the gift of salvation which had been asked from them.[1] They deliberated for a long time, until at length one of the assembly, Aïdan, a monk of Iona, said to the discomfited preacher, "It seems to me, my brother, that you have been too hard upon these ignorant people: you have not, according to the apostolic counsel, offered them first the milk of gentle doctrine, to bring them by degrees, while nourishing them with the Divine Word, to the true understanding and practice of the more advanced precepts."[2] At these words every eye was turned to Aïdan: his opinion was thoughtfully discussed, and the debate ended in an acknowledgment that he was the man wanted for the mission, since he was endowed with that discernment which is the source of all virtues. There was, as we have seen, a bishop in the monastery of Iona, so that Aïdan was at once consecrated missionary and bishop of Northumbria.[3]

He received his mission from the whole brotherhood and from the abbot of Iona, Seghen, the fourth successor of Columba in the monastic metropolis of the Hebrides, the fourth of these great monks to whom Bede himself, somewhat prejudiced as he was against their holy founder, could not refuse the testimony that they were as illustrious for their self-denial as for their love of God and of strict monastic order. The venerable historian could find but one grievance wherewith to charge them and their delegate

[1] "Austerioris animi vir qui cum . . . prædicans nihil proficeretur, nec libenter a populo audiretur . . . in conventu seniorum retulerit, quia nil prodesse docendo genti . . . potuisset, eo quod essent homines indomabiles, et duræ ac barbaræ mentis. . . . At illi . . . tractatum magnum in concilio quid esset agendum, habere cœperunt, desiderantes quidem genti quam petebant solutem esse, sed de non recepto prædicatore dolentes."—BEDE, iii. 5.

[2] "Lac mollioris doctrinæ . . . donec paulatim enutriti verbo Dei, ad capienda perfectiora et ad facienda sublimiora Dei præcepta sufficerent."

[3] "Omnium qui considebant ad ipsum ora et oculi conversi . . . ipsum esse dignum episcopatu, ipsum ad erudiendos incredulos et indoctos mitti debere decernunt, qui gratia discretionis, quæ virtutum mater est, ante omnia probatur imbutus, sicque illum ordinantes, ad prædicandum miserunt."

Aïdan—viz., their fidelity to Celtic observances as to the celebration of Easter, which the clergy of the south of Ireland had abandoned, to conform to the new usage of Rome,[1] but which the Scots of the north of Ireland and of all Caledonia obstinately preserved as they had received it from their fathers.[2]

Everything had to be done, or done over again, in the once Christian Northumbria. To the south, in Deïra, the ravages of Cadwallon and Penda do not seem to have left any traces of the mission of Paulinus except the solitary church at York, where the deacon James had maintained the celebration of Christian worship, and which, begun by Edwin, was completed by Oswald. In Bernicia we must conclude that the Roman bishop restricted himself to itinerating missions, followed by those general baptisms of which we have spoken, but that he had not founded there any permanent station, since, until the cross was planted by Oswald on the eve of his victory over the Britons, it is said that no one had ever seen a church or an altar, or any emblem of the Christian faith.[3]

It was thus a hard task, and one well worthy of a follower of Columba, which presented itself to the monk of Iona, trained in the school of that great missionary.[4]

[1] In 630, at the Synod of Leighlin, thanks to the efforts of two monks, Laserian, superior of the 1500 monks of Leighlin, and Cummian, the disciple of Columba, and author of a famous letter, of which we shall presently hear more, in connection with this wearisome discussion. Compare LANIGAN, *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, vol. ii. chap. 15.

[2] "Qualiscumque fuerit ipse . . . reliquit successores magna continentia ac divino amore regularique institutione insignes. . . . Ab hac ergo insula, ab horum collegio monachorum, ad provinciam Anglorum instituendam in Christo, missus est Ædan, accepto gradu episcopatus."—BEDE, iii. 4, 5.

[3] "Nullum Christianæ fidei signum, nulla ecclesia, nullum altare in tota Berniciorum gente erectum est, priusquam hoc sacræ crucis vexillum novus militiæ ductor, dictante fidei devotione, contra hostem immanissimum pugnaturus statueret."—BEDE, iii. 2, 11.

[4] That is to say, under his successors; for although Aïdan, ordained bishop in 635, might very well have seen and heard Columba, who died in 597, yet no proof can be found in support of Colgan's assertion, which

Aïdan had brought with him several of his brethren, and the number of Celtic monks who came to help him increased from day to day. It became necessary to assign to them, or rather to create for them, a centre of operations. The king left to Aïdan the choice of the seat of his bishopric. Although his diocese comprised the whole of Northumbria, he does not seem to have thought of occupying the vacant see of York. Whether he yielded in this to the prejudices and dislikes which separated the Scots from Roman usages, or whether he was unwilling to quit the northern district, where the mission of Paulinus had left the fewest traces, and where, consequently, he had most work to do, it is certain that he chose to place his episcopal monastery at a distance from the churches founded by the Roman monks in the southern part of the country. He preferred a position a little more central, near the royal residence of Oswald, and on the coast, but much nearer the Firth of Forth than the mouth of the Humber, which mark the two extreme limits of Oswald's kingdom to the north and south.

This choice of a residence shows that, as a monk of Iona, ambitious of following in every respect the example of the great apostle of his race, founder of the sanctuary whence he issued, Aïdan took pleasure in imitating St. Columba even in local particulars. Like him he settled his community in an island near the shore, almost as small, as insignificant, and as barren as Iona was when the holy exile from Ireland landed there. Its position was even in some sort a repetition, in the North Sea, and to the east of Great Britain, of the position of Iona upon the opposite coast, and on the shore of the Atlantic.

Amid the waves of the Northern Sea, opposite the green

ranks him, as well as his successors Finan and Colman, among the direct disciples of the great abbot (*Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 487, 489). He bases this assertion simply on the mention of three persons bearing these names in the biography of Adamnan. Colgan himself deprives this argument of all weight by proving that there are in the Irish calendars 23 saints of the name of Aïdan, and 109 of the name of Colman or Colomban.

hills of Northumberland and the sandy beach which extends between the border town of Berwick on the north, and the imposing ruins of the feudal fortress of Bamborough on the south, lies a low island, flat and sombre, girt with basaltic rocks, forming a kind of square block, which terminates to the north-west in a long point of land stretching towards the mouth of the Tweed and Scotland. This island bears the impress of melancholy and barrenness. It can never have produced anything but the sorriest crops and some meagre pasturage. There is not a tree, not an undulation, not one noticeable feature, save a small conical hill to the south-west, now crowned by a strong castle of picturesque form, but recent construction. In this poor islet was erected the first Christian church of the whole district, now so populous, rich, and industrious, which extends from Hull to Edinburgh. This was Lindisfarne—that is to say, the Mother Church, the religious capital of the north of England and south of Scotland, the residence of the first sixteen bishops of Northumbria, the sanctuary and monastic citadel of the whole country round —the Iona of the Anglo-Saxons. The resemblance of Lindisfarne to Iona, of the colony to the metropolis, the daughter to the mother, is striking. These two isles, once so celebrated, so renowned, so influential over two great and hostile races, have the same sombre and melancholy aspect, full of a wild and savage sadness. Religion only could people, fertilise, and tranquillise these arid and desolate shores.

The island chosen by Aïdan is, however, an island during only a portion of each day. As at Mont St. Michel in France, twice in the twenty-four hours the ebbing tide leaves the sands uncovered, and the passage can be made on foot to the neighbouring shore,[1] though not always without danger, for many stories are told of travellers drowned in attempting to cross

[1] "Insula hæc, accedente reumate, quotidie his undis spumantibus maris alluitur, totiesque refluis maris sinibus, antiqua terra relinquitur."—REGINALDI MONACHI DUNELMENSIS, *Libellus de Admirandis B. Cuthbertii Virtutibus*, c. 12.

to the holy isle at low water. From this new abode Aïdan, looking southward, could descry far off the rock and stronghold of Bamborough, where Oswald, after the example of his grandfather Ida, had established his capital. His eye, like his heart, could there hail the young and glorious prince who was his friend, his helper, and his rival.

Nothing is known of the early history of St. Aïdan. When he first appears to us he is already a monk at Iona, and clothed with a certain authority among his brethren. Even when raised to the episcopate, he remained always a monk, not only in heart, but in life. Almost all his Celtic fellow-workers, whether from Ireland or Scotland, were monks like himself, and followed the cenobitical rule of their order and country. A hundred years after Aïdan, the system which he had established at Lindisfarne was still in full vigour; and, as in his day, the bishop was either himself the abbot of the insular community, or lived there as a monk, subject, like the other religious, to the authority of the abbot, elected with the consent of the brotherhood. The priests, deacons, choristers, and other officials of the cathedral church, were all monks.[1] But this monastic discipline and order would have availed little if the missionary-head of the institution had not possessed the character common to great servants of the truth, and been endowed with those virtues which the apostolical office demands.

Bede,[2] who was born twenty years after the death of the monk-bishop, and who lived all his life in the country which was fragrant with the memory of Aïdan's virtues, has made his character and life the subject of one of the most eloquent

[1] "Monachi erant maxime qui ad prædicandum venerant. . . . Monachus ipse episcopus Ædan."—BEDE, *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 3. "Et monasticam cum suis omnibus vitam semper agere solebat; unde ab illo omnes loci ipsius antistites usque hodie sic episcopale exercent officium, ut regente monasterium abbate quem ipsi cum consilio fratrum elegerint, omnes . . . monasticam per omnia cum ipso episcopo regulam servent."—BEDE, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 16.

[2] It is to Bede we owe all that is known of Aïdan, as of so many other personages of the seventh century.—Compare *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. vi. Augusti, p. 688.

and attractive pictures ever drawn by the pen of the venerable historian. The praise which he awards to him is not only more expressive and more distinct than that given to any other of the monastic apostles of England, but also so much the less to be suspected of partiality, that it is qualified by the most energetic protests against his Celtic peculiarities. "He was," Bede tells us, "a pontiff inspired with a passionate love of goodness; but at the same time full of a surprising gentleness and moderation." Faithful to all the noble teachings of his monastic cradle, he appeared to the future clergy of Northumbria as a marvel of self-denial and austerity. He was the first to practise what he taught, and none could ever reproach him with having failed to fulfil, to his best ability, all the precepts of the gospels, of the apostles, or the prophets.

Indifferent to all worldly possessions, Aïdan expended in alms all that he received from the kings and rich men. To the astonishment of the Saxons, who were, like the modern English, excellent horsemen, and valued nothing more highly than the horse, it was always on foot that the bishop went through town and country, penetrating everywhere—now among the rich, now among the poor—baptizing those who were still heathen, confirming in the faith those who were already Christians, and stimulating all to alms-giving and good works. All who accompanied him, monks or laymen, had to devote a certain portion of each day to meditation—that is to say, to reading the Bible and learning the Psalter. Unwearied in study, humble and peaceful, charitable and sincere, he was especially distinguished by zeal against the sins of the rich. Far from sparing any of their vices or excesses, he rebuked them with the greatest sharpness; and, contrary to the received custom, he never made any present to the chiefs or nobles, restricting himself to simple hospitality when they came to visit him, and giving away to the first beggar whom he met the gifts which they heaped upon him. But the priestly courage which armed

him against the pride of the powerful was transformed into tender and watchful solicitude when he had to defend the feeble, to relieve the needy, or to comfort the unfortunate. His, in a word, was the heart of a true priest and apostle, disdainful of all false grandeur and vain prosperity, and victorious over all the mean and perverse tendencies of his time, and of all times.[1]

Aïdan retained nothing for himself of all the gifts of land which the generosity of the Saxon kings and nobles bestowed upon the Church, whose doctrines they had just embraced. He was content with Lindisfarne and the scanty fields of his poor little isle. But he reserved for himself, wherever it was possible in the vast *villæ* of the kings and nobles, a site for a chapel, with a small chamber attached, where he prepared his sermons, and in which he lodged during his incessant and prolonged journeys.[2]

Like St. Gregory the Great, whom, though not his disciple, he emulated in well-doing, he took an especial interest in the education of children and the emancipation of slaves. From the beginning of his mission he attached to himself twelve English youths, whom he educated with

[1] "Scripsi hæc . . . nequaquam in eo laudans vel eligens hoc quod de observantia paschæ minus perfecte sapiebat immo hoc multum detestans . . . sed quasi verax historicus. . . . Quantum ab eis qui eum novere didicimus, summæ mansuetudinis et pietatis et moderaminis virum. . . . Unde (ab Iona) inter alia vivendi documenta, saluberrimum abstinentiæ et modestiæ clericis exemplum reliquit. . . . Cuncta et urbana et rustica loca, non equorum dorso, sed pedum incessu. . . . Sive adtonsi, seu laici, meditari deberent, id est aut legendis Scripturis aut psalmis discendis operam dare. . . . Nunquam divitibus honoris sive timoris gratia, si qua deliquissent reticebat; sed aspera illos invectione corrigebat. . . . Nullam potentibus seculi pecuniam, excepta solummodo esca si quos hospitio suscepisset, unquam dare solebat. . . . Animum iræ et avaritiæ victorem, superbiæ simul et vanæ gloriæ contemptorem . . . auctoritatem sacerdote dignam, redarguendi superbos ac potentes, pariter et infirmos consolandi, ac pauperes recreandi vel defendendi clementiam."—BEDE, iii. 3, 5, 17.

[2] "In hoc habens ecclesiam et cubiculum, sæpe ibidem diverti ac manere, atque inde ad prædicandum circumquaque exire consueverat: quod ipsum et in aliis villis regiis solebat utpote nil propriæ possessionis, excepta ecclesia sua et adjacentibus agellis, habens."—BEDE, iii. 17.

the greatest care for the service of Christ, and of whom one as least became a bishop. Every church and monastery founded by him became immediately a school where the children of the English received from Aïdan's monks an education as complete as that to be had in any of the great Irish monasteries.[1] As to slaves, he devoted principally to their redemption the gifts which he owed to the munificence of the Anglo-Saxons, endeavouring especially to save such as, to use Bede's expression, had been "unjustly sold,"—which means, probably, those who were not foreign prisoners, or who had not been condemned to slavery as the punishment of crime. For it has been already stated, and it must be kept in mind, that the Saxons, as well as the Celts, made no scruple of selling their brethren and their children like cattle. The freedmen were carefully instructed by Aïdan, numbered among his disciples, and frequently raised to the priesthood.[2] Heathen barbarism was thus assailed and undermined in its very citadel by monks, both from the north and from the south, and by slaves promoted to the rank of priests.

The king and the bishop rivalled each other in virtue, in piety, in ardent charity, and desire for the conversion of souls. Thanks to their mutual and unwearied efforts, every day saw the Christian religion spreading farther and taking deeper root; every day joyous crowds hastened to feed on the bread of the Divine Word, and to plunge into the waters of baptism; every day numerous churches, flanked by monasteries and schools, rose from the soil. Every day new gifts of land, due to the generosity of Oswald and the Northumbrian nobles, came to swell the patrimony of the monks and the poor. Every day, also, new missionaries, full of zeal and fervour, arrived from Ireland or Scotland to help

[1] "Imbuebantur præceptoribus Scotis parvuli Anglorum una cum majoribus studiis et observatione disciplinæ regularis."—BEDE, iii. 3.

[2] "Ad redemptionem eorum qui injuste fuerant venditi. . . . Multos quos pretio dato redemerat, suos discipulos fecit, atque ad sacerdotalem usque gradum erudiendo atque instituendo provexit."—BEDE, iii. 5.

on the work of Aïdan and Oswald, preaching and baptizing converts. And at the same time James the Deacon, sole survivor of the former Roman mission, redoubled his efforts to help forward the regeneration of the country in which he had already seen the faith flourish and decay. He took advantage of the restoration of peace, and the increasing number of the faithful, to add, like a true disciple of St. Gregory, the teaching of music to the teaching of religion, and to familiarise the English of the north with the sweet and solemn melody of the Roman chant, as already in use among the Saxons of Canterbury.[1]

Oswald did not content himself with giving his friend Aïdan the obedience of a son and the support of a king in all that could aid in the extension and consolidation of Christianity. He himself gave a personal example of all the Christian virtues, and often passed whole nights in prayer, still more occupied with the concerns of the heavenly kingdom than with those of the earthly realm which he had so ably won, and for which he was so soon to die. He was not only lavish in alms, giving of his riches, with humble and tender charity, to the humble and the poor, to the sick, to travellers, and to needy strangers who came to the bishop to be nourished with the Word of Life. In addition, he constituted himself Aïdan's interpreter; "and it was," says Bede, "a touching spectacle to see the king, who had, during his long exile, thoroughly learned the Celtic tongue, translating to the great chiefs and the principal officials of his court, the eorls and thanes, the sermons of the bishop, who as yet spoke but imperfectly the language of the Anglo-Saxons.[2]

[1] "Exin cœpere plures per dies de Scotorum regione venire. . . . Construebantur ecclesiæ per loca, confluebant ad audiendum verbum populi gaudentes, donabantur munere regio. . . . Qui quoniam canendi in ecclesia erat peritissimus, recuperata postmodum pace in provincia et crescente numero fidelium, etiam magister ecclesiasticæ cantionis juxta morem Romanorum seu Cantuariorum multis cœpit existere."—BEDE, iii. 3, 11, 20.

[2] "Qui temporalis regni gubernacula tenens, magis pro æterno regno semper laborare solebat. . . . Pauperibus et peregrinis semper humilis,

The tender friendship and apostolic brotherhood which thus united the king and the bishop of the Northumbrians has, perhaps more than anything else, contributed to exalt and hallow their memory in the annals of Catholic England.

Oswald was too active, too popular, too energetic, and too powerful not to make his actions and influence felt beyond the bounds of his own kingdom. Like Edwin, whom he resembles in so many points, notwithstanding the rivalry of their two families, he turned his thoughts and his steps to the south of the Humber. Edwin had converted, for a time at least, his neighbours and vassals, the East Anglians. Oswald went further, and contributed largely to the conversion of the most powerful kingdom of the Heptarchy, next to Northumbria—that of the Saxons of the West, Wessex—a kingdom which was destined to absorb and supplant all the others. The kings of this nation also professed to be of the blood of Odin; they were descended from a chief called Cerdic, perhaps the bravest of all the invaders of the British soil, and who had consolidated his conquests by forty years of craft and war. It was among this warlike race that Oswald sought a wife; but, contrary to ordinary precedent, it was, in this new union, the husband, and not the wife, who took the initiative in conversion. When he went for his bride, Kineburga, into the country of the West Saxons, the king of Northumbria met there an Italian bishop, who had undertaken their conversion, finding them entirely pagan. He did his best to second the laborious efforts of the foreign missionary, and the king, whose daughter he was about to wed, having consented to be baptized, Oswald stood sponsor for him, and thus became the spiritual father of him whose son-in-law he was about to

benignus et largus. . . . Semper, dum viveret, infirmis et pauperibus consulere, eleemosynas dare, opem ferre non cessabat. . . . Pulcherrimo sæpe spectaculo contigit, ut evangelizante antistite qui Anglorum linguam perfecte non noverat, ipse rex suis ducibus ac ministris interpres verbi extiteret cœlestis, quia tam longo exilii sui tempore linguam Scotorum plene didicerat."—BEDE, iii. 12, 9, 6, 3.

become.[1] He took back to Northumbria with him the young convert, who soon bore him a son little worthy of his sire, but yet destined at least to be the founder of a monastery which acted a part of some importance in the history of his people.

All this prosperity was soon to end, as all that is good and beautiful ends here below. The terrible Penda was still alive, and, under the iron hand of that redoubtable warrior, Mercia remained the stronghold of Paganism, even as Northumbria had become under Edwin and Oswald the centre of Christian life in Great Britain. He had left unrevenged the death of his ally, the Briton Cadwallon; he had done nothing to hinder the accession and establishment of a new Christian king in Northumbria. But when that king essayed to cross the river which formed the boundary of the two kingdoms, and to unite to his domains a province which had always belonged to the Mercians,[2] Penda, notwithstanding his age, resumed his old inveteracy towards those whom he saw—again like Edwin—deserting the worship of their common ancestor Odin, and claiming an insupportable supremacy over all the Saxons, Pagan or Christian. He accordingly renewed with the Britons the alliance which had already been so disastrous to the Northumbrians, and, placing himself at the head of the two combined armies, waged for two years a sanguinary war against Oswald, which ended in a decisive battle at Maserfeld, on the western border of Mercia and Northumbria.[3] The struggle was fierce; the brother of Penda perished in the fight, but Oswald, the great and beloved Oswald, shared the

[1] "Cum omnes paganissimos inveniret. . . . Pulcherrimo et Deo digno consortio, cujus erat filiam accepturus in conjugem, ipsum prius secunda generatione Deo dicatum sibi accepit in filium."—BEDE, iii. 7.

[2] Oswald, whether as a conqueror or only as Bretwalda or chief of the confederation, had invaded that province of Lindsey, where Paulinus had founded the Cathedral of Lincoln, where the monks themselves reproached the sainted king of Northumbria, forty years after his death, with having wished to rule over them.

[3] According to some, near Winwick, in Lancashire; according to others at Oswestry, near Shrewsbury.

same fate. He died on the field, in the flower of his years, at the age of thirty-eight. There he fell—the historian of the English Church says with emphasis—fighting for his country. But his last word, his last thought, was for heaven, and for the eternal welfare of his people. "My God," said he, on seeing himself encircled with enemies, overwhelmed by numbers, and already pierced by a forest of arrows and lances—"my God, save their souls."[1] The last cry of this saintly spirit, this young hero, remained long graven on the memory of the Saxon people, and passed into a proverb to denote those who prayed without ceasing in life and in death.

The ferocity of Penda was not even satisfied by the death of his young rival. When the dead body of the king of Northumbria was brought from the battle-field into his presence, the old savage caused the head and hands of the hero to be cut off, and set up on stakes, to intimidate both conquerors and conquered. The noble remains were thus exposed for a whole year, till his brother and avenger, Oswy, carried them away. The hero's head was then taken to Lindisfarne, to the great monastery which he had so richly endowed, and where his holy friend Aïdan awaited it; but his hands were deposited in a chapel in the royal fortress of Bamborough, the cradle of that Northumbrian dominion which the arms of his ancestors had founded, and which his own had so valiantly restored.

Thus perished, at the age of thirty-eight, Oswald, ranked by the Church among her martyrs, and by the Anglo-Saxon people among its saints and heroes of most enduring fame. Through the obscurity of that thankless and con-

[1] "Ubi pro patria dimicans a paganis interfectus est. . . . Vulgatum est autem et in consuetudinem proverbii versum quod etiam inter orationes vitam finierit. . . . Cum armis et hostibus circumseptus, jamjam videret se esse perimendum, oravit pro animabus exercitus sui. Unde dicunt in proverbio: *Deus, misercre animabus, dixit Oswald cadens in terra.*"—BEDE, iii. 9, 12. "Cum stipatoribus fusis ipse quoque ferratam silvam in pectore gereret."—WILHELM. MALMESB., *De Gest.*, lib. i. c. 3.

fused age, the eye rests gratefully on this young prince, reared in exile among the hereditary enemies of his race, who was consoled for the loss of a throne by his conversion to Christianity: who regained the kingdom of his fathers at the point of the sword, and planted the first cross on his native soil, at the moment when he freed it from the usurper; crowned by the love and devotion of the people on whom he bestowed the blessings of peace and of supreme truth, spending his very life for its sake; united for a few short years to a wife whom, in marrying, he had made a Christian; gentle and strong, serious and sincere, pious and intelligent, humble and bold, active and gracious, a soldier and a missionary, a king and a martyr, slain in the flower of his age on the field of battle, fighting for his country and praying for his subjects. Where shall we find in all history a hero more nearly approaching the ideal, more richly gifted, more worthy of eternal remembrance, and, it must be added, more completely forgotten?

It was long, however, before his name was forgotten. During the whole Anglo-Saxon period, and even after the Norman Conquest, under the Plantagenets, this gallant soldier, great king, and generous Christian, continued to be the object of popular veneration. The chroniclers and poets of the time vied with each other in celebrating his fame. "Who, then," said one of them, with that mingling of classic associations and Christian ideas so habitual to the monks and all the writers of the middle ages—"Who, then, is Hercules? who is Alexander the Great? who is Julius Cæsar? We are taught that Hercules conquered himself, Alexander conquered the world, and Cæsar the enemies of Rome; but Oswald conquered at once the world, his enemies and himself."[1]

[1] "Quis fuit Alcides? Quis Cæsar Julius? Aut quis
Magnus Alexander? Alcides se superasse
Fertur; Alexander mundum, sed Julius hostem.
Se simul Oswaldus et mundum vicit et hostem."
—Ap. CAMDEN, *Britannia*, iii. 493.

The monks of the great and magnificent Church of Hexham went in procession every year to celebrate the day consecrated to him at the site of the cross which he had planted on the eve of his first victory. But the love and gratitude of the Christian people gave a still greater glory to the place of his defeat and death. Pilgrims came thither in crowds to seek relief from their sufferings, and had each a miraculous cure to relate on their return. The dust which his noble blood had watered was collected with care and conveyed to great distances as a remedy for disease, or a preservative from the evils of life. By dint of carrying away this dust a hollow was scooped out of a man's size, and which seemed the ever-open tomb of this martyr of his country. On seeing the turf around this hollow clothed with an unwonted verdure, more delicate and beautiful than elsewhere, travellers said that the man who had perished there must needs have been more holy and more pleasing in God's sight than all the other warriors who rested beneath that sward.[1] The veneration of which his remains were the object spread not only among all the Saxons and Britons of Great Britain, but even beyond the seas, in Ireland, and among the Greeks and the Germans. The very stake on which the head of the royal martyr had been fixed was cut up into relics, the fragments of which were regarded as of sovereign efficacy in the healing both of body or of mind. These things provoke a pitying smile from the wise and witty, who in times and countries enslaved by the ascendancy of numbers and physical force are not forbidden to philosophise. But no safer or sweeter asylum has ever been found for humiliated patriotism, violated justice, or van-

[1] "Contigit ut pulverem ipsum ubi corpus ejus in terram corruit . . . multi auferentes . . . qui mox adeo increbuit, ut paulatim ablata exinde terra fossam ad mensuram staturæ virilis reddiderit. Quidam de natione Britonum, iter faciens juxta ipsum locum, vidit unius loci spatium cetero campo venustius ac viridius: cœpitque sagaci animo conficere quod nulla esset alia causa insolitæ illo in loco viriditatis, nisi quia ibidem sanctior cetero exercitu vir aliquis fuisset interfectus."—BEDE, iii. 9, 10.

quished freedom, than the pious tenderness with which Christian nations once surrounded the tomb and relics of those who died for the faith and their rights.

A kind of prophecy, that Oswald's bones would become relics, had been made to him by Aïdan, on the following occasion:—

The bishop had made it a rule to accept very rarely those invitations to the royal table which were considered, among the Germanic races, as signs of the most marked distinction. When he did go he was present only at the beginning of the repast, after which he would hasten away to apply himself, with his monks, to reading or prayer. But on Easter-day the monk-bishop, being at dinner with the king, and seated beside him, had just raised his hand to bless a silver dish filled with delicacies which was placed before Oswald, when the officer to whom the charge of the poor was specially entrusted, suddenly entered to announce that there was a crowd of beggars in the street who besought alms of the king. Oswald immediately gave orders that the food, and the silver dish which contained it, the latter broken in pieces, should be divided among the beggars. As he stretched out his hand to give this order, the bishop seized it and cried, "May this hand never perish!"[1] The following year it was severed from his body, and picked up on the battle-field where he gave his life for God and his people; and the hand of the royal martyr, enshrined in the sanctuary of the ancient Northumbrian capital, continued entire and incorruptible for centuries, was seen and kissed by innumerable Christians, and disappeared only in that abyss of spoliation and sacrilege in which Henry VIII. engulfed all the monastic glories and treasures of England.

[1] "Adceleravit ocius ad legendum aut orandum egredi. . . . Discus argenteus regalibus epulis refertus, jamjam essent manus ad benedicendum panem missuri. . . . Ministrum cui suscipiendorum inopum erat cura delegata. . . . Pontifex qui adsidebat . . . apprehendit dextram ejus et ait: *Nunquam inveterascat hæc manus.*"—BEDE, iii. 5, 6. The Bollandists prove (vol. ii. Aug., p. 87) that the hand still existed in the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER II

NORTHUMBRIA UNDER THE SUCCESSORS OF OSWALD—THE CELTIC BISHOPS—THE GREAT ABBESSES, HILDA AND EBBA

Oswald's successors in Northumbria : Oswy in Bernicia ; Oswin in Deïra.—Oswin's intimacy with Bishop Aïdan.—The son of the mare and the son of God.—New outrages of Penda.—Aïdan stops the burning of Bamborough.—Struggle between Oswy and Oswin.—Murder of Oswin.—Death of Aïdan twelve years after his friend.—The double monastery of Tynemouth, built above the tomb of Oswin.—The wife of the murderer dedicates a monastery to the expiation of the murder.—Reign of Oswy, who was venerated as a saint, notwithstanding his crime, because of his zeal for the truth.—Successors of Aïdan at Lindisfarne, sent by the monks of Iona.—Episcopate of the Scot Finan.—He builds the Cathedral of Lindisfarne of wood.—Colman, second successor.—Novitiate at Melrose.—The young Anglo-Saxons go to study in Ireland.—The female monasteries of Northumbria.—Heïa, the first nun.—Hartlepool.—Aïdan gives the veil to Hilda, princess of Deïra : her rule of thirty years at Whitby.—Description of the place.—The six bishops who issued from the double monastery.—Ceadmon, the cowherd, vassal of Hilda ; the first Anglo-Saxon poet : precursor of Milton, he sings the Paradise Lost ; his holy life and death.—The Princess Ebba, of the rival dynasty, sister of Oswald and Oswy, foundress and abbess of Coldingham : she also rules for thirty years.—Notable disorders in her monasteries.—Fervour and austerity of the Northumbrian monks : extraordinary fasts : different characteristics of Lindisfarne, Coldingham, and Melrose.—A precursor of Dante.—Foundation of Lastingham : Cedd, monk of Lindisfarne.—Testimony borne by the Romano-Benedictine Bede to the virtue, disinterestedness, and popularity of the Celtic missionaries.—Nevertheless, resistance and opposition are not awanting.—Contrast and fickleness of character in the kings as in the people.—Joy of the natives of the coast on seeing the monks shipwrecked.

On the death of Oswald Northumbria fell a prey, first to the ravages of Mercian invasion, then to the complications and

weakness of a divided succession. Like the Merovingian, and even the Carlovingian Franks, although with a less fatal obstinacy, the Anglo-Saxons, and particularly the Angles of Northumbria, could not resist the inclination which led them to accept or to incite the division of a kingdom among several princes as soon as there appeared several heirs of a deceased king. It must be supposed that these divisions answered in England, as in France, to certain distinctions of race, or to certain exigencies of local or provincial self-government, which could not be reconciled with the existence of one supreme authority. Oswald left a son in childhood, whose claims were not at that moment taken into consideration. His brother Oswy, still in the flower of his youth, and though much less saintly than Oswald, no less a good soldier and valiant captain, at once took his place in Bernicia—that is to say, in the northern part of Northumbria. As for Deïra, it fell to a prince of the Deïrian dynasty, grand-nephew to Ella, the founder of that race,[1] and son of that ill-fated Osric who had reigned for a year only over Southern Northumbria after the downfall of his cousin Edwin in 633—a short reign, which left him scarce time enough to renounce the baptism which he had received from the hands of Paulinus, and to perish under the sword of Cadwallon's Britons. His son, called Oswin, had been saved while yet a child by his friends, who sent him out of Northumbria, and had passed his youth in exile, like Edwin, and the two brothers Oswald and Oswy. Exile seems to have been the necessary and salutary apprenticeship of the Northumbrian kings.

On hearing of the death of Oswald he claimed his right of succession. The old subjects of his father and grand-uncle gladly received him.[2] The principal nobles met in

[1] See the genealogical table, Appendix A.

[2] "Audiens Oswinus exulans, quod, Oswaldo defuncto, regnaret Oswin pro fratre suo, inito cum suis consilio ad regnum Deïrorum regressus, ab omni plebe lætante recepitur. . . . Omnibus ejus beneficia postulantibus hilariter impendebat."—JOAN. TYNEMOUTH., ap. BOLLAND., t. iv. Aug., p. 63. "Parvo temporis intervallo principes primatesque regni convene-

assembly, acknowledged his hereditary right, and proclaimed him king of the Deïrians; and for seven years he governed them to the satisfaction of all. He was still very young, of lofty stature, endowed with remarkable comeliness and grace—a matter of no small importance in an age and among a people extremely sensible to external advantages. But he had, in addition, all the virtues which were then regarded as proofs of sanctity. His extreme gentleness, his charity, and, above all, his humility, were universally extolled. He was, moreover, so accessible, so courteous and generous, that the noblest lords of all Northumbria vied with each other in seeking the honour of serving among those officers of his household whom the Latin historians designate in England, as elsewhere, by the name of *ministeriales*.[1]

Although Oswin had been exiled among the Saxons of Wessex, and not in Scotland, like his cousins and rivals Oswald and Oswy, and had been thus entirely out of contact with the Celtic monks, he was already a Christian when he returned to Northumbria, and did not hesitate to recognise the episcopal authority of Aïdan. During his whole reign the monk of Iona, now Bishop of Lindisfarne, continued to travel throughout the two kingdoms which formed his immense diocese—not confining himself to preaching in the new churches, but going from house to house to foster beside the domestic hearth the seeds of the new-sown faith.[2] It was a special pleasure to him on such

runt in unum communicatoque unanimite reconsilio B. Oswinum hæreditatis juris successorem Deïrorum dominum in regem sublimantes."—*Vita Oswini*, p. 3, *in the Publications of the Surtees Society*, 1838.

[1] "In maxima omnium rerum affluentia et ipse amabilis omnibus præfuit. . . . Aspectu venustus et statura sublimis et affatu jucundus et moribus civilis et manu omnibus nobilibus et ignobilibus largus. . . . Unde contigit ut . . . undique ad ejus ministerium de cunctis prope provinciis viri etiam nobilissimi concurrent."—BEDE, iii. 14.

[2] "Propter nascentis fidei teneritudinem provinciam circumeundo fidelium domos intrare verbique divini semina pro captu singulorum in agro cordis eorum cominus spargere."—*Vit. Osw.*, p. 4.

occasions to rest under the hospitable roof of the young king of Deïra, with whom he always lived in as tender and thorough a union as that which had united him to Oswald.

An oft-repeated anecdote, which reveals at once the pleasant intimacy of their relations and the noble delicacy of their minds, has been left us by Bede. Aïdan, as we have said, performed all his apostolic journeys on foot, but it was the king's wish that he should have at least a horse to cross the rivers, or for other special emergencies; he gave him accordingly his best steed, splendidly caparisoned. The bishop accepted it, and made use of it; but being, as Bede calls him, "the father and worshipper of the poor," it happened ere long that, meeting a man who asked alms, he leaped down from his royal courser, and gave it, harnessed as it was, to the beggar. The king, being informed of this, said to Aïdan, as they were going to dinner together, "Lord bishop, what do you mean by giving my horse to that beggar? Had I not many other horses of less value, and property of every kind to give in alms, without the necessity of giving that horse that I had expressly chosen for your own special use?" "What is this you say?" replied Aïdan. "O king, the horse, which is the son of a mare, is it dearer to you than the man who is the son of God?" As he said this they entered the banqueting hall. Oswin, who had just returned from the chase, approached the fire with his officers, before sitting down at the table, and while he warmed himself, thought over the words of the bishop; then all at once taking off his sword, he threw himself at the feet of the saint, and implored his pardon. "No more," said he, "shall I speak of it, and never more shall regret anything of mine that you give to the children of God." After which, reassured by the kind words of the bishop, he sat down joyously to dine. But the bishop, on the contrary, became very sad, and began to weep. One of his priests inquired the cause of his sadness; upon which he replied,

in the Celtic tongue, which neither Oswin nor his attendants understood, "I know now that the king will not live long; never until now have I seen a king so humble; and this nation is not worthy of such a prince."[1]

This little tale, Ozanam truly says, forms a perfect picture; it discloses in those barbarous times a sweetness of sentiment, a delicacy of conscience, a refinement of manners, which, more than knowledge, is the sign of Christian civilisation.

The sad foreboding of the saint was realised only too soon. But it was not, like his predecessors, under the assault of the fierce Penda and the coalition of Mercians and Britons that the amiable and conscientious Oswin was to perish. Penda, however, had resumed his devastating career, and continued for thirteen years longer to ravage Northumbria. But he seems to have entertained less unfriendly feelings to his neighbours the Deïrians and their king, than to the Bernicians, and Oswy the brother of his last victim. It is in the north of the two kingdoms that we again find him carrying everywhere fire and sword,[2] and attempting to give to the flames the royal fortress of Bamborough. There also we find Aïdan, the benefactor and protector of the country. Penda, not having been able to reduce the fortress either by assault or by investment, caused an enormous pile to be erected all round the ram-

[1] "Desiliens ille præcepit equum ita ut erat stratus regaliter, pauperi dare: erat enim . . . cultor pauperum ac velut pater miserorum. . . . Quid voluisti, Domine Antistes, equum regium quem te conveniebat habere, pauperi dare? Numquid non habuimus equos viliores plurimos . . . qui ad pauperum dona sufficerent? . . . Quid loqueris, rex? Num tibi carior est ille filius equæ, quam ille filius Dei. . . . Porro rex (venerat enim de venatu) cœpit consistens ad focum calefieri cum ministris, et repente inter calefaciendum recordans verbum quod dixerat illi Antistes, discinxit se gladio suo . . . festinusque accedens ante pedes episcopi corruit. . . . Quia nunquam deinceps aliquid loquar de hoc, aut judicabo quid et quantum de pecunia nostra filiis Dei tribuas. . . . Lingua sua patria quam rex et domestici ejus non noverant. . . . Nunquam ante hoc vidi tam humilem regem."—BEDE, iii. 14.

[2] "Cum cuncta quæ poterat ferro flammaque perderet."—BEDE, iii. 17.

part. He heaped on it all the wood of the surrounding forests, the driftwood from the beach, the beams, and even the thatch of the cottages in all the neighbouring villages which he had destroyed; then, as soon as the wind blew from the west, he set fire to the mass, with the hope of seeing the flames reach the town. Aïdan was at the time in the islet of Farne, an isolated rock in the open sea, a little to the south of Lindisfarne, and nearly opposite Bamborough, to which he often went, quitting his episcopal monastery to devote himself in solitude and silence to prayer. While he prayed he saw a cloud of black smoke and jets of flame covering the sky above the town where his dear Oswald once dwelt. Lifting his eyes and hands to heaven, he cried, with tears, "My God, behold all the evil that Penda does us!" At the same moment the wind changed, the flames whirled round upon the besiegers, destroying many of them, and they speedily abandoned the siege of a place so evidently under Divine protection.[1]

As if this formidable and pitiless enemy was not enough to desolate Northumbria, there arose in the heart of Oswy a jealous animosity which soon ripened into civil war. After seven years of union between the two kings of Bernicia and Deïra, occasions of estrangement, ever increasing, began to arise between them. These were owing, it cannot be doubted, to the preference which, we have already remarked, was shown by so many of the Northumbrian lords for the pleasant and cordial service of King Oswin. Oswy marched against the Deïrians. Oswin likewise put himself at the head of his army; but it was much less numerous than that of the king of Bernicia, and when the moment of battle arrived, he said to the chiefs and lords of his country that he was reluctant to make them risk their lives for him whom they had raised from the position of a

[1] "Plurimam congeriem trabium, tignorum, parietum, virgarum et tecti fenei et his urbem in magna altitudine circumdedit . . . ventis ferentibus globos ignis ac fumum, . . . *Vide, Domine, quanta mala facit Penda.*"—Bede, iii. 16.

poor exile to be their king, and who now did not shrink either from renewed exile or death itself.[1] He then disbanded his troops and sought refuge with an earl on whom he thought he could rely, having just conferred on him, after many other bounties, the very manor of Gilling where he reckoned on finding an asylum. This wretched traitor gave him up to Oswy, who had the cruelty to kill him. One companion, Tondhere by name, alone remained to him. Oswin, resigned to his own death, besought that his friend might be spared; but he refused to survive his prince, preferring to sacrifice himself to that sentiment of passionate devotion which, among the Saxons, had preceded Christianity, and which justifies the title of knight prematurely applied to this brave and loyal adherent by one of the martyr's biographers.[2]

The king and his knight thus perished together; and twelve days afterwards the glorious Bishop Aïdan followed the king he loved to the tomb.[3] He fell sick during one of his innumerable missionary expeditions, and died under a tent which had been pitched in haste to shelter him at the back of a modest church which he had just built. He expired with his head resting against one of the buttresses of the church. It was a death which became a soldier of the faith upon his own fit field of battle.[4]

The body of Aïdan was carried to his monastic cathedral of Lindisfarne. But that of his royal friend, Oswin, was deposited in a chapel dedicated to the blessed Virgin, and situated on a granite headland almost entirely surrounded by the sea, at the mouth of the Tyne, a river which was

[1] JOANN. TYNEMOUTH., *loc. cit.*

[2] "Maluit miles morti succumbere quam mortuo domino, etiamsi copia daretur, supervivere."—*Ibid.* Compare BEDE, *loc. cit.*

[3] "Non plus quam duodecimo post occisionem regis quem amabat die." —*Ibid.*

[4] "Tetenderunt ægrotanti tentorium, ita ut tentorium parieti adhæreret ecclesiæ. Adclinis destinæ quæ extrinsecus ecclesiæ pro munimine erat adposita."

then the boundary line between the two Northumbrian states of Deïra and Bernicia, and which is now one of the principal arteries of the maritime commerce of England. Ere long, over the sacred remains of this martyr, who was beloved and honoured by the Northumbrians of both kingdoms as their father and lord on earth, and their patron saint in heaven, there rose one of those double monasteries which included both monks and nuns within two separate enclosures, but under one government.[1] The nuns whose office it was to pray upon his tomb came from Whitby, which was already governed with a splendour as great as her authority was absolute, by the abbess Hilda, herself sprung, like the martyred Oswin, from the Deïrian dynasty and the race of Ella. The vicissitudes of this great monastery throughout the invasions of the Danes and Normans; the constant or ever-reviving veneration with which the remains of St. Oswin were regarded, even after the remembrance of his friend Aïdan was totally effaced;[2] the protection which the poor, the afflicted, and oppressed long found under the shadow of his sanctuary, and under the shelter of what was called the *Peace of St. Oswin*, will possibly be related in the sequel of our narrative, or by other and more competent pens. We must content ourselves at present with merely pointing out the beautiful remains of the conventual church which was rebuilt in the thirteenth century, and which is enclosed within the fortress which defends the entrance of the Tyne. The seven great arcades, whose time-worn relics rise majestically against the sky from the height of their rock, produce a vivid effect on

[1] "Ut dominum et patrem in terris, defensorem reputarent in cœlis: unde processu temporis ad majorem martyris gloriam sanctimoniales virgines de cœnobio S. Hildæ abbatissæ ad corpus ejus introductæ, usque ad persecutionem Danicam . . . in supremo religionis culmine permanserunt."—MATH. WESTM., ad ann. 1065. Compare BOLLAND., t. iv. Aug., pp. 58, 59.

[2] "De sancto rege Oswino nonnulla dudum audieram, sed sancti Aydani episcopi nec nomen ad me pervenerat," says a traveller, miraculously cured in the twelfth century.—*Vita Oswini*, p. 32.

the traveller who arrives by sea, and nobly announce England's adoration of the ruins she has made.[1]

Some years later, on the very spot where Oswin had perished, at Gilling, near Richmond, a monastery was reared in expiation of so foul a crime, by the wife of his murderer. This was no other than Eanfleda, daughter of King Edwin, she whose birth had contributed to the conversion of her father,[2] who had been the first-born of Christ in the Northumbrian kingdom, and who, after the overthrow of Edwin and the Roman mission in Northumbria, had been carried in her cradle by Bishop Paulinus into the country of her mother, Ethelburga, daughter of the first Christian king of Kent.

Oswy, who was as able as he was ambitious, readily perceived that it was not enough to murder a rival in order to secure himself in the exclusive sovereignty of Northumbria. He had previously wished to conciliate the opposing dynasty by a matrimonial alliance, as his father Ethelfrid had done.[3] In pursuance of this purpose, he had despatched to Canterbury, with Aïdan's approval and blessing, a priest respected for the gravity and sincerity of his character,[4] and abbot of one of the new monasteries,[5] to obtain from Queen Ethelburga, if she still lived, the hand of her daughter. His suit was granted, and the exiled princess returned to reign over the kingdom that she had quitted in her blood-stained cradle. In this double Northumbrian dynasty, the history of which

[1] There is a large and handsome recent work on the monastery of Tynemouth, entitled, *History of the Monastery founded at Tynemouth in the Diocese of Durham, to the honour of God, under the invocation of the B. V. M. and St. Oswin, King and Martyr*, by WILLIAM SYDNEY GIBSON. London, 1846, 2 vols. 4to.

[2] See *ante*, p. 261.

[3] See the genealogical table of the two races in the Appendix.

[4] "Utta, multæ gravitatis vir et ob id omnibus, etiam principibus seculi honorabilis."—BEDE, iii. 15.

[5] At Gateshead on the Tyne, opposite Newcastle. Compare Smith's notes on BEDE, iii. 21. There was still at Gateshead, in 1745, a Catholic chapel, which was burnt by the populace out of hatred to Prince Charles Edward.—CAMDEN'S *Britannia*, Gough's edition, vol. iii. p. 123.

is at once so dramatic and romantic, and so closely interwoven with the history of the conversion of the English, exile was almost always the forerunner of the kingly office, or of sainthood. Eanfleda, cousin-german of the murdered king, and wife of the king who killed him, obtained permission from her husband to build a monastery on the spot where the murder had been committed, that prayers might be offered there for ever for two souls, that of the victim and that of the murderer. The government of this new foundation was entrusted to Trumhere, himself a scion of the family of Deïrian princes, and one of those Anglo-Saxons who, like the negotiator of Eanfleda's marriage, had been trained and raised to the priesthood by the Celtic monks.[1]

Upon this noble daughter of Edwin, restored from exile to reign over the country of her ancestors as the wife of the cruel Oswy, the mind rests with emotion. A natural desire arises to attribute to her influence the happy change which appears to have been wrought in the character of Oswy from the day on which she induced him to expiate the crime with which he was stained, by founding this monastery. Forgetful of this crime, all the historians unite in extolling the virtues and exploits which distinguished the after portion of his prolonged and active reign. He did not continue at first, after the assassination of Oswin, the undisputed master of all Northumbria; he had to give up at least a part of Deïra to the young son of his brother Oswald, Ethelwald by name. But he retained, notwithstanding, an evident preponderance, not only in Northumbria, but in all England, the dignity of *Bretwalda* having fallen to him uncontested. The great event of his reign is the overthrow of the fierce heathen, Penda of Mercia, an event which sealed the final victory of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons. But both before and after this culminating point

[1] "De natione quidam Anglorum, sed edoctus et ordinatus a Scotis . . . propinquus et ipse erat regis occisi: in quo monasterio assiduæ orationes pro utriusque regis, id est, et occisi: et ejus qui occidere jussit, salute æterna fierent."—BEDE, iii. 24.

of his prosperity, Oswy displayed so ardent and consistent a zeal for the extension and establishment of the Christian religion, that he was finally admitted to a place, sometimes too easily accessible, in the English martyrology.[1]

Nevertheless, neither the zeal of Oswy, nor the purer ardour of his illustrious predecessor, could have prevailed against the various and formidable obstacles which the Gospel had to encounter among the Anglo-Saxons, had they not been directed, enlightened, and sustained by the admirable clergy whom Aïdan and his successors had trained in the cloisters of Lindisfarne and its dependent monasteries.

In regard to the succession of bishops in the new diocese of Lindisfarne, it is necessary to keep in mind the very significant difference between the usages followed by the Roman and those of the Celtic missionaries in the election of bishops. The first four successors of Augustine at Canterbury were all, as we have seen, chosen from among the Italian monks who had accompanied him to England: but they all belonged to that first mission, and were all freely chosen by their companions, old or new, in place of being successively sent from Rome, as the bishops of Lindisfarne were from Iona. In fact, at each vacancy in the see of Lindisfarne, the monks of Iona, who regarded that monastic cathedral, and perhaps the whole of christianised Northumbria, as their exclusive property, hastened to despatch a monk of their community to replace him who had rendered his soul to God. The Scottish monks, thus placed during thirty years at the head of the Church of the North of England, showed themselves thoroughly worthy of the saintly school whence they issued, and of the glorious mission to which they were consecrated. But it is, nevertheless, important to note that, either owing to distance or some other cause, Rome left to her missionary communities, her apostolic colonies, a liberty which was not possible under the harsh discipline of the Celtic Church.

[1] 15th February : Compare *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. ii. Feb., p. 801.

The first monk sent from Iona to replace the noble Aïdan, is known by the name of St. Finan.[1] His episcopate was prosperous; it lasted ten years,[2] and was not interrupted by any melancholy event, such as those which had troubled the life of Aïdan by taking from him his two royal friends. Finan always lived on good terms with king Oswy, and before going to join his predecessor in heaven, he had the happiness of introducing to the Church the heads of the two great Saxon kingdoms, who came to seek baptism at the gates of Lindisfarne. In that island-sanctuary, where we must remember that the bishop was often in ecclesiastical subjection to the local abbot of the monastic community, Finan caused a cathedral to be built, not of stone, like that which Paulinus and Edwin had commenced at York, but according to the Celtic custom, and like the churches built by Columba and his Irish monks: it was made entirely of wood, and covered with rushes, or rather with that long rough sea-grass, whose pivot-like roots bind together the sands on the sea-shore, and which is still found in great abundance on the island, as well as on the sandy beach which has to be crossed before the traveller can rea Lindisfarne.[3]

[1] "Et ipse illo ab Hii Scotorum insula ac monasterio destinatus."—BEDE, iii. 25. Cf. *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. iii. Feb., p. 21.

[2] The Breviary of Aberdeen, quoted by the Bollandists, affirms that Finan's promotion to the episcopate was preceded by a kind of election or postulation proceeding from the clergy and people of Northumbria, the nuns included: "Congregatis cleri populique concionibus, virorum et mulierum utriusque sexus, unanimiter S. Finanum in episcopum Lindisfarnensem Spiritus Sancti gratia eligi instanter postulaverunt et solemniter assumpserunt." But besides the fact of our finding no trace of any similar election in these ancient monuments, it appears to us incompatible with the formal testimony of the almost contemporary Northumbrian Bede: "Interea Aidano de hac vita sublato, Finan pro illo gradum episcopatus, a Scotis ordinatus ac missus, acceperat."—BEDE, iii. 25.

[3] "Fecit ecclesiam episcopali sede congruam; quam tamen more Scotorum, non de lapide, sed de robore secto totam composuit atque arundine texit." This herb is called in English *bent*, and the sandy flats which it covers, and which extend along all the coast of Northumbria and of southern Scotland, take the name of *links*.

Vast as was his diocese, which embraced the two great Northumbrian kingdoms, and great as must have been his influence over the other Saxon provinces, Finan seems farther to have preserved and exercised an authority not less complete over the country of his origin, the kingdom of the Dalriadian Scots. The Scots annalists all speak of a certain King Fergus, who, by his violence and exactions, had raised the indignation of the Scottish clergy, and called down upon himself a sentence of excommunication from the bishops of Lindisfarne, Finan and his successors.[1] These Celtic bishops were at all times far from courtly. Finan left among the Anglo-Saxons the reputation of a man rough and intractable,[2] and we shall see that his successor was no less difficult than himself.

He was succeeded by Colman, a monk of Iona, sent forth by that community, like Aïdan and Finan, to govern the Northumbrian Church,[3] and to evangelise the Northern Anglo-Saxons. He is believed to have been born in Ireland, and on this account he is held in honour there. It has even been supposed that in him might be recognised one of those young disciples of Columba, whose rustic labours the great abbot blessed and encouraged from the threshold of the cell in which he pursued his solitary studies.[4] True or false, this tradition accords with history, which shows us in Colman a pontiff penetrated with the same spirit as his predecessors, and always worthy of the monastic sanctuary which, for more than a century, was rendered illustrious by the genius and memory of Columba.

[1] BOECE and LESLIE, ap. BOLLAND., *l. c.*

[2] "Quod esset homo ferocis animi."—BEDE, *l. c.*

[3] "Et ipse missus a Scotis. . . . Venit ad insulam Hii unde erat ad prædicandum verbum Anglorum genti destinatus."—BEDE, iii. 23; iv. 4.

[4] ADAMNAN, ii. 16. It is very difficult, however, to admit the identity of the *Colman* of whom Adamnan speaks with Colman the Bishop of Lindisfarne: supposing he had been but twenty years of age at the date of Columba's death in 597, he would have been above eighty at the time of his promotion to the episcopate in 661, and would have been nearly one hundred when he died in 675. Comp. LANIGAN, *op. cit.*, vol. iii. pp. 59–61.

Lindisfarne, as may easily be supposed, did not suffice for the training, or indeed for the shelter, of the army of monks employed by the Celtic bishops in the spiritual conquest of Northumbria. To the north of the Tweed, the present boundary between England and Scotland, and about half-way from Lindisfarne to the Scots frontier, they established a kind of branch or establishment for novices, where the monks destined for the labours and trials of the apostolate were received and trained. Some of these, like their bishops, came from Iona, Ireland, and the land of the Scots, while others were taken from the ranks of the Saxon converts.[1] This outpost of Lindisfarne and Iona bore the name of *Melrose* — not the Cistercian Melrose, with the name of which Walter Scott has made us familiar, while its picturesque ruins attract all the visitors of the famous quadrilateral formed by the four most beautiful ruins in Scotland, Kelso, Jedburgh, Dryburgh, and Melrose—but a more ancient and more holy Melrose—whose memory has been too much effaced by its brilliant offspring. It was situated on a kind of rounded promontory almost completely encircled by the winding current of the Tweed, the banks of which at this part of its course are very abrupt and thickly wooded. The spot was one of profound solitude, as the very name indicates (*Mail-ross* or *Mul-ross*, desolate point);[2] and here was raised a sanctuary, which was for many years the centre of light and life to all the surrounding country, long frequented by pilgrims, whose paths are still pointed out, and from whence issued many of the

[1] VARIN, second paper.

[2] The site is still called *Old Melrose*. It is occupied by a pretty country-house, which belonged in July 1862 to a Mr. Fairholme. It is not more than three miles from the magnificent ruins of the celebrated Cistercian abbey of the same name, the richest and most powerful of all the Scottish abbeys, and which still contained one hundred monks in 1542, when it was destroyed by the Reformers.—MORTON'S *Monastic Annals of Teviotdale;* Edin. 1832, folio. WADE'S *History of St. Mary's Abbey, Melrose* 1861, Edin.

saints most venerated in the south of Scotland and north of England.[1]

The first abbot of Melrose was Eata, one of the twelve young Saxons whom the first Celtic bishop chose for himself as the first-fruits of his episcopate.[2] But neither the zeal of the pastors nor the fervour of the converts was satisfied with those fountains of life and knowledge which gushed forth in Northumbrian soil. Older and more abundant springs were necessary to them. A crowd of youths, some the sons of thanes or nobles, others of the lowest rank, left their country to cross the sea and visit the distant island which was the cradle of their bishops and missionaries —not the monastic isle of Iona, but the great island of Ireland, where Columba and most of his disciples were born. Of these young Anglo-Saxons, some, inflamed by the love of study or of penance, at once enrolled themselves in the crowded ranks of those great Irish communities where the monks were counted by hundreds and even by thousands; others travelled from monastery to monastery, from cell to cell, seeking the masters who suited them best, and giving themselves up under these masters to the delight of *reading*—that is to say, of study, without binding themselves by any other obligation. All were received with magnificent hospitality by the Scots of Ireland, who freely lavished on them not only food and clothing, but books and instruction.[3] All the students who remained in Ireland, as well as those who returned to England, continued to retain a natural prepossession in favour of the ancient insular rites, and to be imbued with that peculiar spirit which so long characterised the Christianity of the Celtic races.

Thus began, under the most honourable conditions, and

[1] Boisil, first prior of Melrose, whose name is preserved in the neighbouring village of *Newtown St. Boswell's;* Eata, first abbot of Melrose, then Bishop of Lindisfarne; and especially the celebrated and popular Cuthbert, of whom more anon.

[2] See preceding chapter, p. 295.

[3] See the text of Bede (iii. 27) already quoted, vol. iii. p. 158.

motives as pure as they were generous, the first historical relations between England and Ireland—between the two races, Saxon and Celtic, who were destined by an unhappy mystery to tear one another in pieces even before religion divided them; one of whom, repaying those early benefits by the blackest ingratitude, has long tarnished the lustre of her glory by the perverse stubbornness of her despotism.

While so many young Northumbrians, as yet scarcely escaped from the darkness of idolatry, were thus rushing towards the very heights of ascetic life, or plunging with passionate enthusiasm into the studious and learned career of which Ireland was the great centre, and the Celtic cloisters the principal home, their sisters found asylums where peace and freedom were guaranteed to those whom the service of God and the vows of Christian virginity drew into them. Thanks to the solicitude of the missionary bishops of the line of Columba, the dignity, authority, and moral power which universal report from Tacitus downward agrees in according to the Germanic woman, assumes in the cloister a new, more durable, and universal form, without, however, lessening the duty and right which she was acknowledged to possess of occasional intervention in the gravest concerns and most solemn deliberations of the commonwealth.

The principal monasteries destined to afford a home and stronghold to the noble daughters of the conquering Saxons were established on the coast of Northumbria, where already Bamborough and Lindisfarne, the military and the religious capitals of the country, were planted, as if the waves of that sea which their warlike ancestors had crossed, and which flowed direct from the coasts of Germany to beat upon the shores of the conquered island, were to be their safeguard against the dangers of the future. The first of these monasteries was built on the borders of Deïra and Bernicia, on a wooded promontory where the deer then found a covert, and which has since become, under the name of

Hartlepool, one of the most frequented ports on the coast.[1] It was founded by a Northumbrian, Heïa by name, the first woman of her race who embraced conventual life, and who received the veil and religious consecration from the hands of Bishop Aïdan.[2] The life of a community, and especially the functions of superior, soon, however, became fatiguing to Heïa, who betook herself to a solitary retreat in the interior of the country. Aïdan replaced her by a descendant of Odin and of Ella, a princess of the blood-royal and of the Deïrian dynasty. This was Hilda, grand-niece of Edwin, the first Christian king of Northumbria, and father of the queen who shared the throne and the bed of Oswy.

This illustrious lady seemed to be called by her genius and character even more than her rank to exercise a great and legitimate authority over her compatriots. Born in exile, during the sovereignty of Ethelfrid, among the Saxons of the West, where her mother died a violent death, she had returned with her father on the restoration of his race in 617. In her early youth she had been baptized, with her uncle King Edwin, by the Roman missionary Paulinus, which did not, however, prevent her from leaning during her whole life to the side of the Celtic missionaries. Before consecrating her virginity to God, she had lived thirty-three years *very nobly*, says Bede, among her family and her fellow-citizens. When she understood that God called her, she desired to make to Him a complete sacrifice, and forsook

[1] "Heruteu, id est, insula cervi."—BEDE, iii. 24. *Hert* or *hart*, stag; *cu*, isle. We shall take leave throughout to use the modern names of towns and monasteries instead of the Saxon names, which divers erudite modern writers have tried to reintroduce. We shall then say Whitby and not *Streaneshalch*, Hartlepool and not *Heruteu*, Hexham and not *Halgulstadt*.

[2] "Quæ prima feminarum fertur in provincia Nordanhymbrorum propositum vestemque sanctimonialis habitus, consecrante Ædano episcopo, suscepisse."—BEDE, iv. 23. It will be seen farther on whether it is possible to adopt the common opinion which confounds this first Northumbrian nun with St. Bega (*St. Bees*), the Irish princess, who is mentioned at another place.

at once the world, her family, and her country.[1] She went into East Anglia, the king of which had married her sister, and whence she designed to cross over to France, in order to take the veil either at Chelles, where her widowed sister was one day to devote herself to God,[2] or in some of the monasteries on the shores of the Marne, which sprang from the great Irish colony of Luxeuil, and whither the Saxon virgins already began to resort.[3] She spent a whole year in preparations for her final exile, but she was not permitted to carry it out. Bishop Aïdan authoritatively recalled her to her own country, and settled her there, obtaining for her a small estate sufficient to support a single family, and situated on the banks of the Wear, a little river which has now become, like the Tyne, one of the greatest arteries of English shipping. There she lived as a nun with a very few companions until Aïdan summoned her to replace the foundress of the monastery of Hartlepool, where she was invested with the government of a large community.

[1] "Desiderans exinde, si quo modo posset, derelicta patria et omnibus quæcunque habuerat, in Galliam pervenire. . . . Quo facilius perpetuam in cœlis patriam posset mereri."—BEDE, iv. 23.

[2] Bede seems to imply that Hereswintha, queen of East Anglia, was already a nun at Chelles, when Hilda wished to take the veil there; which would be an impossibility, as Hilda became abbess of Hartlepool before Aïdan's death in 651, and her sister could scarcely take the vows before the death of her husband, King Anna, slain in 654. It is then to the close of Hilda's cloister life that Bede's words must apply: "In eodem monasterio soror ipsius Hereswid . . . regularibus subdita disciplinis ipso tempore coronam exspectabat æternam."—Cf. THOMAS ELIENSIS, ap. WHARTON, *Anglia Sacra*, t. i. p. 595. Besides, the Monastery of Chelles, which a vague tradition refers to St. Clotilda, was actually founded by the Saxon Bathilda, and she became queen of Neustria only on her marriage with Clovis II. in 1549. Some uncertainty, farther, rests on this Heriswida. Pagi (*Critic. in Baronium ad an.* 680) maintains that she became a nun in 647—seven years before her husband's death. Various English historians give her for husband, not Anna, but one of the brothers of that prince, Ethelher or Edric.

[3] See vol. ii. p. 329.

[4] The original monastery of Hartlepool, destroyed in the ninth century, like all others on the Northumbrian coast, by the Danes, was not restored,

Nine years later, when the peace and freedom of Northumbria had been secured by the final victory gained by king Oswy over the Mercians, Hilda took advantage of a gift of land sufficient for ten families, which that prince had granted her, to establish a new monastery at Streaneshalch, now Whitby, a little to the south of her ancient abbey, and on the same coast.

Of all the sites chosen by monastic architects, after that of Monte Cassino, I know none grander and more picturesque than that of Whitby. It is even, in certain aspects, still more imposing than the Benedictine capital, as being near the sea. The Esk, which flows through a hilly country, unlike the ordinary levels of England, forms at its mouth a circular bay, commanded on every side by lofty cliffs. On the summit of one of these rocks, 300 feet above the sea, Hilda placed her monastery, on a platform of green and short seaside turf, the sides of which slope abruptly to the northern ocean. From this spot the eye wanders now over the uplands, valleys, and vast heaths of this part of Yorkshire, now along the rough precipices which line the coast, now on the wide horizon of the sea, whose foaming waves break against the perpendicular sides of the great rocky wall which is crowned by the monastery. The dull roar of the tide accords with the sombre tints of the rocks, which are rent and hollowed out by its force; for it is not here as on the shores of the Channel, where the whiteness of the cliffs has gained the name of Albion for the island of Great Britain. The precipices of the Yorkshire coast are, on the

but replaced later by a convent of Franciscans. An ancient church, dedicated to St. Hilda, still exists, near which excavations carried on between 1833 and 1843 brought to light several Anglo-Saxon tombs, with the emblems and names of women—*Hildithryth*, *Hildigyth*, *Canngyth*, *Berchtgyd*, *Bregusvid*—which seem to have been those of nuns of the Anglo-Saxon community. The last of these names is that of the mother of Hilda, and several of the others are found in the correspondence of St. Boniface with the Saxon nuns. This discovery has given rise to an interesting work, without date or author's name, entitled *Notes on the History of St. Begu and St. Hild*. Hartlepool.

contrary, as dark in colour as they are abrupt and rugged in outline.[1] Nothing now remains of the Saxon monastery: but more than half of the abbey church, restored by the Percies in the time of the Normans, still stands, and enables the marvelling spectator to form to himself an idea of the solemn grandeur of the great edifice. The choir and the north transept are still complete, and offer one of the most beautiful models of English architecture. The two façades of the east and north, each with three rows of three-pointed windows, are of unrivalled elegance and purity. The beautiful colour of the stone, half worn away by the sea-winds, adds to the charm of these ruins. A more picturesque effect could not be imagined than that of the distant horizon of the azure sea, viewed through the great hollow eyes of the ruinous arches. These majestic relics are now preserved with the respect habitually shown by the English to the monuments of the past; but they cannot always withstand the destroying action of time and the elements. The great central tower fell in 1830. Let the intelligent traveller lose no time, therefore, in visiting one of the oldest and most beautifully situated ruins in Europe, and let him there accord a prayer, or at least a remembrance, to the noble daughter of the Northumbrian kings, who of old erected on this desert rock a pharos of light and peace for the souls of men, by the side of the lighthouse designed to guide the mariners on that stormy sea![2]

[1] Not so the rocks which border the inner bay formed by the embouchure of the Esk. They are of a brilliant white, and these bright cliffs in the midst of the great black rocks of the coast explain why the Danes, after having destroyed the monastery of Hilda, gave the name of Whitby (*White-by*, white dwelling) to the establishment they created there.

[2] The principal details of this monastic church, which is of the beautiful order known as the *Early English*, are perfectly rendered in the magnificent folio published by Edmund Sharpe, an architect, and entitled *Architectural Parallels selected from Abbey Churches*, London, 1848, 121 plates. It was 300 feet long by 70 broad. It is marked by one curious peculiarity; it describes a curve, slightly bending towards the south, so that the door in the western façade is not in an exact line with the central window of the

The original name, Streaneshalch, signified *The Isle of the Beacon*, and it was probably by this service conferred on the people of the coast that Hilda inaugurated her reign on this promontory; for it was a true reign, temporal as well as spiritual. At Whitby, as at Hartlepool, and during the thirty years that she passed at the head of her two houses, she displayed a rare capacity for the government of souls, and for the consolidation of monastic institutions. This special aptitude, joined to her love of monastic regularity, and her zeal for knowledge and ecclesiastical discipline, gave her an important part to play, and great influence. Her society was sought by Bishop Aïdan, and all the religious who knew her, that they might learn those secrets of divine love and natural wisdom which dwelt in her. The kings even, and princes of her blood, or of the adjacent provinces, often came to consult her, asking enlightenment which they afterwards joyfully acknowledged themselves to have received. But she did not reserve for the great ones of the earth the treasures of her judgment and charity. She scattered around her everywhere the benefits of justice, piety, peace, and temperance. She was ere long regarded and honoured as the mother of her country, and all who addressed her gave her the sweet name of mother, which she so well deserved. Not only in Northumbria, but in distant regions, to which the fame of her virtue and enlightenment had penetrated, she was to many the instrument of their salvation and conversion.[1] And in her two communities especially she secured,

choir. These ruins are now part of a farm belonging to Sir Richard Cholmondeley. The town of Whitby, situated at the foot of these ruins, on the Esk, is a very flourishing seaport, and much frequented by bathers.

[1] "Quam omnes qui noverant, ob insigne pietatis et gratiæ Matrem vocare consueverant . . . nam et episcopus Aïdan et quique noverant eam religiosi pro insita et sapientia et amore divini famulatus, sedulo eam visitare . . . solebant. . . . Regularis vitæ institutioni multum intenta. . . . Tantæ autem erat ipsa prudentiæ, ut non solum mediocres in necessitatibus suis, sed etiam reges ac principes nonnunquam ab ea quærerent consilium et invenirent. . . . Quam omnes qui noverant, ob insigne pietatis et gratiæ Matrem vocare consueverant. . . . Etiam plurimis longe

during a rule of more than thirty years, the supremacy of order, union, charity, and equality, so much, that it became usual to say to the proud Northumbrians, that the image of the primitive Church, wherein was neither rich nor poor, and where all was common among the Christians, was realised at Whitby.

But the most touching particular of all in the enthusiastic narrative of the Venerable Bede, is that which proves the passionate tenderness felt for her by her daughters, especially by the young virgins whom she prepared for religious life in a separate house, by the discipline of a novitiate establishment regularly constituted and attentively superintended.[1]

Nor did the royal abbess confine herself to the government of a numerous community of nuns. According to a usage then very general, but principally prevailing in Celtic countries, a monastery was joined to the nunnery. And Hilda inspired the monks subject to her authority with so great a devotion to their rule, so true a love of sacred literature, and so careful a study of the Scriptures, that this monastery, ruled by a woman, became a true school of missionaries and even of bishops.[2] Many ecclesiastical dignitaries, as remarkable for their virtue as for their learning, were sent forth by it;[3] one of whom in particular, St. John of Beverley, attained a degree of popularity

manentibus ad quos felix industriæ ac virtutis ejus rumor pervenit, occasionem salutis et correctionis ministravit."

[1] "Cuidam virginum . . . quæ illam immenso amore diligebat. . . . In extremis monasterii locis seorsum posita ubi nuper venientes ad conversionem feminæ solebant probari, donec regulariter institutæ in societatem congregationis susciperentur."

[2] "Tantum lectioni divinarum Scripturarum suos vacare subditos . . . faciebat, ut facillime viderentur ibidem qui ecclesiasticum gradum, hoc est, altaris officium apte subirent, plurimi posse reperiri."—BEDE, iv. 23.

[3] Bede names six with the highest eulogies—"Quinque episcopos omnes singularis meriti ac sanctitatis viros. . . . Vir strenuissimus et doctissimus, atque excellentis ingenii vocabulo Tatfrid, de ejusdem abbatissæ monasterio electus."

rare even in England, where the saints were of old so universally and so readily popular.

But neither the kings nor princes who consulted the great abbess on her sea-girt promontory, nor the bishops, nor even the saints nurtured in her school, occupy in the annals of the human mind, or in the learned researches of our contemporaries, a place comparable to that held by an old cowherd who lived on the lands belonging to Hilda's community, and whose memory is inseparably connected with hers. It is on the lips of this cowherd that the Anglo-Saxon speech first bursts into poetry, and nothing in the whole history of European literature is more original or more religious than this first utterance of the English muse. His name was Ceadmon. He had already reached an advanced age, having spent his life in his humble occupation, without even learning music, or being able to join in the joyous choruses which held such a high place at the feasts and social gatherings of all classes, both poor and rich, among the Anglo-Saxons as among the Celts. When it was his turn to sing at any of these festal meetings, and the harp was handed to him, his custom was to rise from table and go home. One evening, when he had thus withdrawn from his friends, he went back to his humble shed and went to sleep by the side of his cattle. During his slumber he heard a voice, which called him by name and said to him, "Sing me something;" to which he replied, "I cannot sing, and that is why I have left the supper and come here." "Sing, notwithstanding," said the voice. "But what, then, shall I sing?" "Sing the beginning of the world; the creation." Immediately on receiving this command, he began to sing verses, of which before he had no knowledge, but which celebrated the glory and power of the Creator, the eternal God, worker of all marvels, father of the human race, who had given to the sons of men the heavens for their roof, and the earth for their dwelling-place. On awaking, he recollected all that he

had sung in his dream, and hastened to tell all that had happened to him to the farmer in whose service he was.[1]

The Abbess Hilda, when the story was repeated to her, called for Ceadmon and questioned him in the presence of all the learned men whom she could assemble around her. He was made to relate his vision and repeat his songs, and then different passages of sacred history and various points of doctrine were explained to him, that he might put them into verse. The next morning he was again called, and immediately began to recite all that had been told him, in verses which were pronounced to be excellent. He was thus discovered all at once to possess the gift of improvisation in his mother tongue. Hilda and her learned assessors did not hesitate to recognise in this a special gift of God worthy of all respect and of the most tender care. She received Ceadmon and his whole family within the monastic community of Whitby, and afterwards admitted him to the number of monks who were under her rule, and made him carefully translate the whole Bible into Anglo-Saxon. As soon, accordingly, as the sacred history and the Gospel were narrated to him, he made himself master of the tale, ruminated it, as Bede said, as a clean animal ruminates its food, and transformed it into songs so beautiful that all who listened to him were delighted.[2] He thus put into verse the whole of Genesis and Exodus, with other portions of the Old Testament, and afterwards the life and passion of our Lord and the Acts of the Apostles.

His talent and his poetic faculty thus went on day by day to fuller development, and he devoted numerous songs

[1] "Nonnunquam in convivio cum esset lætitiæ causa decretum ut omnes per ordinem cantare deberent, ille ubi abpropinquare sibi citharam cernebat, surgebat a media cœna. . . . Dum relicta doma convivii egressus esset, ab stabula jumentorum . . . ibique membra dedisset sopori. Cædmon, canta mihi aliquid . . . at ille: Nescio cantare. . . . Canta principium creaturarum."—BEDE, iv. 24.

[2] "Ipse cuncta, quæ audiendo discere poterat, rememorando secum et quasi mundum animal ruminando, in carmen dulcissimum convertebat; suaviusque resonando doctores suos vicissim auditores suos faciebat."

to such subjects as were best calculated to induce his companions to forsake evil and love and practise the good: the terrors of the last judgment, the pains of hell, the joys of paradise, the action of Divine Providence in the world—all these great and momentous subjects were in their turn woven into his verse. The fragments that remain enable us to estimate the earnest and impassioned inspiration, strongly Christian and profoundly original, which characterised these first efforts of genius, barbarous, but subdued and baptized.

The Northumbrian cowherd, transformed into a monk of Whitby, sang before the abbess Hilda the revolt of Satan and Paradise Lost a thousand years earlier than Milton, in verses which may still be admired even beside the immortal poem of the British Homer.[1] Notwithstanding Bede's assertion that poetry cannot be translated from one language to another without losing its honour and dignity, we shall borrow from the nervous pen of one of our contemporaries a translation which conveys a just idea of the sombre and wild genius of this truly biblical poet.[2] "Why," says Satan, speaking of God, "should I implore His favour, or bow myself before Him with obedience? I can be a god like Him. Up with me, brave companions who will not fail me in the struggle! brave-hearted warriors who have chosen me for your chief! illustrious soldiers! With such warriors,

[1] This fragment of Ceadmon's poem on the revolt of Satan, discovered by Archbishop Usher, and printed for the first time in 1655, has been preserved, and frequently published since that date. It has been republished with learned annotations by Dr. Bouterweck, *De Cedmone poeta Anglo-Saxonum vetustissimo brevis Dissertatio*, at Elberfeld, 1845. Sir F. Palgrave, one of the most competent critics of English history and literature, justly remarks that there are in this fragment passages so like the *Paradise Lost* that some of Milton's lines read like an almost literal translation. There was an interval of a thousand years between them, Ceadmon dying about 680, and Milton in 1674. Compare SHARON TURNER'S *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, l. iv. c. 3.

[2] "Neque enim possunt carmina, quamvis optime composita, ex alia in aliam linguam ad verbum sine detrimento sui decoris ac dignitatis transferri."

in truth, one can choose a side; with such combatants one can seize a post. They are my zealous friends, faithful in the warmth of their hearts. I can, as their chief, govern in this kingdom; I have no need to flatter any one; I will be His subject no more!"

He is vanquished, and hurled into the city of exile—into the abode of groans and hatred—into the hideous eternal night, the darkness of which is broken by smoke and crimson flames. "Is this," he says, "the narrow spot in which my master shuts me up? How different from the dwellings that we know on high in the kingdom of heaven! Oh! if I had the free power of my hands, and if I could issue forth for once, for one winter only, I and my army! But bands of iron surround me—chains bind me down helpless. I am without a kingdom. The fetters of hell shackle me so firmly, clasp me so tightly! Here are huge flames; above and below I have never seen so horrible a place. The fire never languishes—its heat ascends above hell. The rings that encircle me, the manacles that gnaw my flesh, keep me from advancing, and close the way before me; my feet are tied, my hands imprisoned. Thus has God shut me in." Since nothing can be done against Him, it is against His own creature, man, that the enemy must turn. To him who has lost all, revenge is still left; and in securing that, the vanquished may yet be happy and rest placidly even under the weight of the chains with which he is laden.[1]

It would, however, be a totally mistaken idea to recognise

[1] This translation is borrowed from *L'Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, by M. Taine. The author of that work, in which so much talent is mixed up with so many lamentable errors, says very justly of Ceadmon: "Thus is true poetry born. . . . It does but repeat, over and over, one passionate burden. These are the songs of the ancient servants of Odin, now tonsured and wrapt in a monk's frock. Their poetry remains unchanged. They think of God, as of Odin, in a succession of images, brief, crowded, impassioned, like successive flashes of lightning. The Satan of Milton exists in that of Ceadmon as a picture exists in a sketch, for both derive their picture from the race, and Ceadmon has found his materials in the warriors of the North, as Milton in the Puritans."

in the Abbess Hilda's dependant nothing but a poet or literary pioneer; he was above all a primitive Christian, a true monk, and, in one word, a saint.[1] His mind was mild and humble, simple and pure; he served God with tranquil devotion, grateful for the extraordinary grace that he had received from heaven. But he was so full of zeal for monastic regularity that he opposed with great vehemence the transgressors of the rule—an error for which he seems to have felt some compunctions at the very point of death. No frivolous or worldly subjects ever inspired his verse; he composed his songs only that they might be useful to the soul, and their solemn beauty did even more for the conversion than for the delight of his countrymen. Many were moved by them to despise this world, and to turn with ardent love to the divine life. Many Englishmen after him, says Bede, have tried to compose religious poems; but no one has ever equalled the man who had only God for his master.[2]

He died as poets seldom die. At the very beginning of his illness he desired his bed to be made in that part of the infirmary which was assigned to the dying, and while smiling and talking cheerfully with his brethren, asked for the *viaticum*. At the moment when he was about to administer the communion to himself, according to the usage of the period, and while holding in his hands the holy

[1] The Bollandists have devoted a special article to him (vol. ii. Feb., p. 552), *De S. Cedmono, cantore theodidacto;* but they make no material addition to what we learn from Bede.

[2] "Erat vir multum religiosus et regularibus disciplinis humiliter subditus. . . . Quadam divina gratia specialiter insignis. . . . Quicquid ex divinis litteris per interpretes disceret hoc ipse post pusillum. . . . Verbis poeticis maxima suavitate et compunctione compositis in sua, id est, Anglorum, lingua proferret. . . . Alii post illum in gente Anglorum religiosa poemata facere tentabant, sed ei nullus æquiparari potuit; non ab hominibus . . . sed divinitus adjutus gratis canendi donum accepit. . . . Unde nihil unquam frivoli et supervacui poematis facere potuit; sed ea tantummodo quæ ad religionem pertinent. . . . Simplici ac pura mente tranquillaque devotione Domino servierat."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

eucharist, he asked all those who were round him if any one had any grudge against him, or any complaint to make. All answered, No. Then said he, "I too, my children, have a mind at peace with all God's servants." A little after he had made his communion, as they were about to awaken the monks for matins, he made the sign of the cross, laid his head on the pillow, and fell asleep in silence, to awake no more.[1]

Apart from the interest which attaches to Ceadmon from a historical and literary point of view, his life discloses to us essential peculiarities in the outward organisation and intellectual life of those great communities which in the seventh century studded the coast of Northumbria, and which, with all their numerous dependants, found often a more complete development under the crosier of such a woman as Hilda than under superiors of the other sex. It is apparent that admission to the benefits of monastic protection and shelter was not confined to isolated monks, but was extended to whole families.[2] And the example of Hilda also discloses how earnest was the desire of the superiors of monasteries to instruct the ignorant masses, and to familiarise them, by instruction in the vulgar tongue, or by poetic paraphrases, with Holy Scripture and Christian doctrine.

Whitby, with its lighthouse and its great monastery, was the most southerly place of refuge on that Northumbrian coast, still so formidable to sailors, which at that time was lined with so many sanctuaries. At the northern extremity of the same coast, beyond Lindisfarne, on what is now the

[1] "In proxima casa, in qua infirmiores et qui prope morituri esse videbantur, induci solebant. . . . Cum ibidem positus vicissim aliquo gaudente animo, una cum eis qui ibidem ante inerant, loqueretur et jocaretur. . . . *Et tamen*, ait, *afferte mihi eucharistiam.* Qua accepta in manu, interrogavit si omnes placidum erga se animum et sine querela controversiæ ac rancoris haberent. . . . Sicque se cœlesti muniens viatico . . . reclinavit caput ad cervical, modicumque obdormiens, ita cum silentio vitam finivit."

[2] "Susceptum in monasterium cum omnibus suis fratrum cohorti adsociavit."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

frontier of Scotland, at Coldingham, rose also, as at Whitby, two monasteries—the one for men and the other for women —both founded and governed by one abbess. While Hilda, the Deïrian princess, ruled her monasteries on the shores of her father's kingdom, Ebba, a princess of the rival dynasty, granddaughter of Ida the Burner, daughter of Ethelfrid the Ravager, but sister of the sainted King Oswald, and of Oswy the reigning king, formed on the sea-coast of Bernicia another monastic centre, which was yet to hold an important position, and to work out a stormy history. It had been the intention of her brother to give her in marriage to the king of Scots—a union meant undoubtedly to strengthen or to re-establish the alliance of the restored family of Ethelfrid with the Scottish dynasty which had offered the exiles such generous hospitality during the reign of Edwin, the chief of the race by which they had been exiled. Ebba, however, was obstinately opposed to this marriage. Her family had all embraced, during their banishment, the principles of the Christian faith, and it was now her desire to advance to the practice of the counsels of the Gospel. It was not from the hands of Aïdan, but from those of Finan, his successor at Lindisfarne, that she received the veil:[1] Oswy left her at liberty to devote herself to God, and gave her a piece of land on the banks of the Derwent where she might found her first monastery, which received the name of Ebba's Castle.[2] But the principal scene of her activities was Coldingham, in a situation which she seems to have chosen in emulation of that of Whitby. Her great and famous monastery was built, not on the spot now called by her name,[3] but on the summit of an isolated promontory which still bears the title of St. Abb's Head, or Cape, and which abruptly terminates the range of the Lammermoors, thrusting itself

[1] *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. v. August, p. 197.

[2] Ebbæ-Castrum, whence Ebbchester, a village in the county of Durham.

[3] It owes this name to a priory founded by a colony of monks from Durham in 1098, and very richly endowed by the kings of Scotland.

out into the German Ocean. From this headland, or rather precipice, which rises perpendicularly for more than 500 feet from the level of the sea, the view embraces, on the north, the Scotch coast to the farther side of the Forth, and, on the south, the English coast as far as the holy isle of Lindisfarne and the royal acropolis of Bamborough. A small ruined chapel is all that remains to mark the site of the great sanctuary of Ebba, who was, like Hilda, placed at the head of a double community of men and of women, and presided over the religious life of northern Northumbria with no less success, and for an equal length of time, taking her part, also during nearly thirty years, with no less authority in the affairs of her country.[1]

She did not always succeed, however, in maintaining amongst her daughters the fervour and the regularity of which she herself gave an example. That relaxation of discipline from which, by a mysterious and terrible judgment of God, the religious orders have never been able to preserve themselves, and which was destined to invade so speedily the Anglo-Saxon cloisters, made its way into Coldingham even during the lifetime of the foundress. She was warned of this by a holy priest of her community who had come from Ireland with the other Celtic missionaries, and who was called Adamnan, like the historian and successor of Columba at Iona. As he went with the abbess through the vast and lofty buildings which she had erected upon her promontory, he said to her with tears, "All that you see here, so beautiful and so grand, will soon be laid in ashes." And as the astonished princess exclaimed against his prophecy, "Yes," continued he; "I have seen in my vigils an unknown one who has revealed to me all the evil that is done in this house, and the punishment that is prepared for it. He has told me that he has visited each

[1] "Sanctimonialis femina et mater ancillarum Christi, nomine Ebba, regens monasterium . . . religione pariter et nobilitate cunctis honorabilis."—BEDE, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 10.

cell and each bed, and that everywhere he has found the monks and the nuns either wrapt in a shameful sleep, or awake to do evil. These cells, intended for prayer or for study, are made use of sometimes for irregular repasts, sometimes for senseless gossip and other frivolities. The virgins, consecrated to God, employ their leisure in weaving garments of excessive fineness, either to attire themselves as if they were the brides of men, or to bestow them on strangers. For this the vengeance of heaven will send fire to consume the place and chastise its inhabitants." It is evident that these scandals were not by any means so serious as many that occurred elsewhere and at a later period; but in the midst of the general fervour of the new Christians of England they seemed to deserve fire from heaven. Ebba, thus warned, did what she could to amend the state of affairs, and the fire which devastated for the first time her great community did not break out till after her death.[1]

It is right to give this incident with some minuteness, for it is the only symptom of decay which we have discovered in the period. With this one exception, no cloud, of which history has preserved any record, obscures the

[1] "Cuncta hæc quæ cernis ædificia publica vel privata, in proximo est ut ignis absumens in cinerem convertat. . . . Singulorum casas ac lectos inspexi . . . omnes et viri et feminæ aut somno torpent inerti, aut ad peccata vigilant. Nam et domunculæ quæ ad orandum vel legendum factæ erant, nunc in commissationum, potationum, fabulationum et cæterarum sunt illecebrarum cubilia conversæ, virgines . . . quotiescunque vacant, texendis subtilioribus indumentis operam dant. . . . Post obitum abbatissæ redierunt ad pristinas sordes, immo sceleratiora fecerunt."—BEDE, iv. 25, Honest Bede, always so careful in stating the source of his narratives, does not fail to tell us that he had these details from a priest of Coldingham, who, after the fire, fled for refuge to the Monastery of Yarrow, in which the author of the *Ecclesiastical History of the English* composed his work. Let us add that regular discipline was promptly re-established in Ebba's monastery, and that in the following century, at the invasion of the Danes in 870, the nuns, in order that they might not attract the passion of these barbarians, cut off their noses and lips; thus, in saving their honour, winning the glory of martyrdom.

renown of the regular clergy of Northumbria. The universal admiration won for the monastic capital of Lindisfarne by the regularity, the fervour, and the extraordinary austerity of its numerous inhabitants, is proved by all witnesses as with one voice. Their fasts, which came to them by tradition and obligation from Ireland, excited special wonder—fasts very much more meritorious in that raw, damp climate, than those of the fathers of the desert under the burning sky of the East, and which contrasted strangely with the habitual voracity of the Anglo-Saxons, whose sons began to people Lindisfarne and its dependencies. In Ireland the Cenobites, and especially the Anchorites, frequently lived on bread and water alone.[1] Two centuries later, a German[2] monk related to his wondering countrymen that the usage of the Scotic monks who inhabited Ireland was to fast all the year round except on Sundays and feast-days, and never to eat before nones or vespers. Bishop Aïdan induced all the communities of monks and nuns in Northumbria to adopt the fast which he observed himself—namely, to eat nothing before nones on the Wednesdays and Fridays of every week, except those between Easter and Pentecost.[3] At Lindisfarne, for more than a century, wine and beer was totally unknown; and the first relaxation of this severity was introduced in favour of a king of Northumbria who became a monk there in 737.[4]

Elsewhere these customs were improved upon by still more notable austerities. At Coldingham, the Adamnan of whom we recently spoke, expiated a youthful fault by taking food only twice a-week, on Sundays and Thursdays, while, at the same time, he often passed the whole night in vigils. He adopted this system from remorse and fear of

[1] Bede, v. 12.
[2] Ratramnus Corbeiensis, *Contra Græcos*, lib. iv.
[3] Bede, iii. 5.
[4] Roger Hoveden, ap. Lingard, i. 227.

God, but the love of God at last transformed it into a delight.[1] At Melrose, a monk was held in veneration who, having fallen into a trance, had one of those visions of heaven and hell which made many of the Celtic monks precursors of Dante. It was his custom to plunge into the waters of the Tweed which flowed by the monastery, to pray there, and that even when the river was covered with ice, which he had to break before he could enter the stream. "Brother Drychthelme," some one called to him from the bank, "how can you bear such cold?" "I have seen it harder and colder," he quietly answered.[2]

When a new monastery was to be founded, the Celtic missionaries and the monks trained in their school thought they could not better inaugurate it than by redoubling their fervour and austerity. The son of the sainted King Oswald, who held a kind of provincial royalty in Deïra, determined to establish a monastery where he might hear the word of God, and, above all, where he might be buried, and be benefited after his death by the powerful help of the prayers of those who served God in that place. For this purpose he applied to a monk of Lindisfarne, who had become a missionary bishop among the Saxons of the East, persuading him to accept one of his estates as an endowment. This man of God—Cedd by name—chose a spot among the mountains as difficult of access as possible, and which seemed fit rather for the haunt of bandits or wild beasts than of men. He then proceeded to purify the spot

[1] "Quod causa divini timoris semel ob reatum compunctus cœperat, jam causa divini amoris delectatus præmiis indefessus agebat."—BEDE, iv. 25.

[2] "De fluentibus circa eum semifractarum crustis glacierum, quas et ipse contriverat quo haberet locum standi sive immergendi in fluvio. . . . Mirum, frater Drychthelme, quod tantam frigoris asperitatem ultra rationem tolerare prævales. . . . Frigidiora ego vidi . . . austeriora ego vidi."—BEDE, v. 12. Bede is careful to mention, as he always does when he relates his marvels, that he has the story from a certain Irish monk, who, as well as the wise Northumbrian King Aldfrid, had often visited and conversed with this Drychthelme.

he had selected by prayer and fasting, and asked leave from the king to remain there in prayer the whole of Lent. During this retreat he fasted every day except Sunday till evening, and then took only a little bread, an egg, and some milk and water. Such, said he, was the custom of those from whom he had learnt the rules of monastic discipline;[1] and such was the beginning of the Monastery of Lastingham, between York and Whitby, which was established on the model of Lindisfarne. We shall hereafter see its abbots holding an honourable place in the annals of the Church of England.[2]

Let us quote once more, in evidence of the virtues of the monks and bishops who converted the north of England, the unquestionable testimony of the celebrated historian, who was at once their adversary and their successor, but who, notwithstanding his dislike, and his strangely exaggerated description of their special peculiarities, yet rendered to the services and virtues of the Celtic missionaries that signal homage which generous hearts delight to accord to the vanquished whom they honour. "The greatness of their disinterestedness and self-denial was very apparent," says Bede, "after their retreat." At Lindisfarne and elsewhere they had only such buildings as were absolutely necessary for existence and decency.[3] They had neither money nor cattle: what the rich gave them they immediately distributed to the poor. They did not consider them-

[1] "Ne tunc quidem nisi panis permodicum, et unum ovum gallinaceum cum parvo lacte aquæ mixto percipiebat. Dicebat hanc esse consuetudinem eorum a quibus normam disciplinæ regularis didicerat. . . . Expleto studio jejuniorum et orationis, fecit ibi monasterium . . . et religiosis moribus, juxta ritus Lindisfarmensium ubi educatus erat, instituit."—BEDE, iii. 23. Whence we can see, says Fleury, that in that country neither milk, nor even eggs, were forbidden in Lent.—*Hist. Eccl.*, l. xxxix. c. 4.

[2] There is still to be seen at Lastingham a beautiful church, believed to be one of the oldest in England.

[3] "Paucissimæ domus . . . illæ solummodo sine quibus conversatio civilis esse nullatenus poterat."—BEDE, iii. 26.

selves bound to receive with splendour the lords and nobles who came to their monasteries for the sole purposes of prayer and to hear the word of God. Kings themselves, when they came to Lindisfarne, brought no more than five or six attendants with them, and contented themselves with the ordinary fare of the brethren. These apostles desired to serve God only, and not the world—they sought to win men through the heart only, not through the stomach. Thus the monkish frock was held in great veneration. Wherever a clerk or a monk appeared he was received with welcome as a true servant of God. Those who met him by the way hastened to bow their heads before him and receive his benediction. Their discourses were listened to by attentive crowds. Every Sunday these crowds flowed into the churches of the monasteries, to gather there the seed of life. As soon as a priest appeared in a village, all the inhabitants clustered round him begging him to preach to them. The priests and clerks travelled through the country only to preach, to baptize, to visit the sick, to save souls. They were so entirely free from all desire of gain, that the princes and nobles had to force them to accept the lands and estates necessary for the founding of monasteries.[1]

It is not, however, to be supposed, that the conversion of Northumbria and of the six other kingdoms of the Heptarchy was carried through without hindrance and convulsions. The monastic historians have made the mistake of dwelling too lightly on the resistance and the revolts which their heroes had to encounter, and which added so much to the merit of what they achieved in the sight of God, as well as in that of man. But enough is visible to enable us easily to fill up what they have left untold. During the two centuries which separate the arrival of Augustine from the accession of Egbert, the perpetual conflict of the savage and uncontrollable nature

[1] "Tota enim tunc fuit sollicitudo doctoribus illos, Deo serviendi, non sæculo; tota cura cordis excolendi, non ventris."—BEDE, iii. 26.

of the Saxon kings with their new faith and the authority of the bishops and monks, is apparent. Changeable as Proteus, we see them constantly escaping by abrupt changes from all the efforts made to obtain a salutary influence over them. The king who to-day distinguished himself by the fervour of his devotions, and his munificence to the new establishments, would to-morrow abandon himself to all the debaucheries and excesses suggested, or pardoned, by heathen instinct. Others sought in the very monasteries, and among the virgins consecrated to God, a prey attractive beyond all other to their ungovernable sensuality. Intestine wars, usurpation, murder, pillage, abominable torture, violence, and spoliation of every kind, sully at every turn the pages which have preserved to us so many pious and touching incidents. And it was not the kings and chiefs only that were hard to win : the people presented the same difficulties, the same disappointments. In vain the holy bishops and monks, produced so rapidly and in such numbers by the Saxon race, endeavoured to win souls and purify them by an exhaustless charity, bestowing with free hands on the poor all the treasures that they received from the rich. Frequently the revolt was open, and the apostle of a district found himself obliged to fly into solitude or exile, there to await the dawn of better days. Sometimes an unforeseen calamity, famine or pestilence, sufficed to convulse the minds of a people, who then in a body would abjure the faith of Christ, and return to their ancient gods. On one side the monks had to struggle without intermission against old customs, which all their zeal could not avail to extirpate, —against the inveterate belief in witchcraft, against the practice of the slave trade, with all its refinements of greed and debauchery;[1] while, on the other, dull resistance, murmurs, and threats accompanied the work of salvation.

On the north-east coast of England, where the Celtic missionaries had just founded such illustrious monasteries,

[1] TURNER, *op. cit.*, book vii. c. 9, p. 53.

certain tribes of the coast took vows for their destruction. Bede himself, from whom we have just borrowed so striking a picture of the popularity which surrounded them in Northumbria, forgot, in that description, various particulars which he has recorded elsewhere. It is he who tells how, when the little vessels of the monks, abroad in foul weather, ran the risk of being swamped at the mouth of the Tyne, a crowd of spectators assembled on the shore exulting in their danger, mocking at their self-devotion, and crying with savage irony—"Well done! this will teach them to live differently from everybody else. Perish the fools who would take our ancient customs from us, imposing new ones, which God knows how we can observe!"[1]

Nevertheless, truth and goodness conquered everything. In the long run the humble courage and generous perseverance of the missionaries triumphed over the fury, cunning, and opposition of fallen nature in these children of barbarism. The soldiers of Christ,[2] as from that time the monks were called, remained masters of the field of battle.

[1] "Stabat in altera amnis ripa vulgaris turba non modica . . . cœpit irridere vitam conversationis eorum, quasi merito talia paterentur, qui communia mortalia jura spernentes, nova et ignota darent statuta vivendi. . . . Rustico et animo et ore stomachantes. . . . Nullus, inquiunt, hominum pro eis roget, nullus eorum misereatur Deus, et qui veteres culturas hominibus tulere, et novæ qualiter observari debeant nemo novit."—BEDE, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 3. This anecdote refers to the time when Cuthbert, though he had reached the age of adolescence, was not yet a monk. He became a monk at fifteen. He was born in 637. It was, therefore, about 650 or 651, and exactly at the time of the great Northumbrian foundations at Hartlepool, &c.

[2] "Milites Christi."—BOLLAND., t. ii. Jun., p. 236.

CHAPTER III

PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY BY THE KINGS AND MONKS OF NORTHUMBRIA.—FINAL TRIUMPH OF NORTHUMBRIA UNDER OSWY

Influence of the three Northumbrian Bretwaldas and their Celtic clergy on the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy.

1. *East Anglia.*—Vicissitudes of Christianity.—The king, converted by Edwin, is assassinated.—His brother, exiled in France, returns a convert with the missionary bishop, Felix.—The king and the bishop evangelise East Anglia.—Supposed origin of Cambridge.—The Irish monk, Fursy, assists in their work.—The visions which make him a forerunner of Dante.—King Sigebert becomes a monk; he issues from his cloister to fight, armed with a staff, against Penda; and dies on the field of battle.—A king-monk among the Cambrians perishes in the same way fighting against the Saxons.—Anna, the successor of Sigebert, is, like him, killed by Penda.
2. *Wessex.*—Christianity is brought hither by King Oswald and the Italian bishop, Birinus.—Oswald, son-in-law and godfather of the king of the West Saxons.—Popular verses about Birinus.—The son of the first Christian king, who had continued a heathen, and had been dethroned by Penda, is converted during exile; re-established in Wessex, he summons thither as bishop a Frank who had been educated among Celts, but afterwards desires a bishop acquainted with Anglo-Saxon.—Foundation of Malmesbury and of Winchester.—An English abbot at Glastonbury.—The Anglo-Saxons begin to occupy the episcopal sees.—A West Saxon becomes the first English Archbishop of Canterbury.—Ercombert, king of Kent, destroys the idols.
3. *Essex.*—King Oswy converts his friend Sigebert, king of Essex, baptized by Finan in the villa of the Northumbrian king.—A monk of Lindisfarne becomes Bishop of London.—The first Christian king of Essex killed by his cousin, because he is too ready to forgive.—The first bishop dies of the plague, and thirty of his friends go to die on his tomb.—Relapse of the East Saxons into idolatry. A new king and a new bishop, educated by the Celts, bring them back to the faith.
4. *Mercia.*—Influence of the king of Northumbria and of the Bishop of Lindisfarne on the conversion of the Mercians.—The son of King Oswy, married to a daughter of the king of Mercia, converts the brother of his wife, and marries him to his sister.—The Celtic missionaries in

Mercia.—Unexpected tolerance of the ferocious Penda towards his son and his converted subjects. But he continues his devastations in Northumbria.—Last conflict between him and Oswy.—Battle of Windwaëd.—Defeat and death of Penda, the last hero of Saxon paganism.—Oswy offers his daughter to God in acknowledgment of the victory, and founds twelve monasteries.—Final triumph of the Northumbrians and of Christianity.—Conquest and conversion of Mercia.—Its first five bishops issue from Celtic cloisters.—Opposition of the monks of Bardeney to the worship of St. Oswald.—The Mercians, revolting against the Northumbrians, nevertheless remain Christians.

Summary.—Of eight Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, one only is exclusively converted by the Roman missionaries; four are converted by the Celtic monks alone; and two by the combined action of the Celts and of bishops sent from Rome.—Sussex alone remains to be won, where a Celtic colony resides without influence.

From the cloisters of Lindisfarne, and the heart of those districts in which the popularity of ascetic pontiffs such as Aïdan, and martyr kings such as Oswald and Oswin, took day by day a deeper root, Northumbrian Christianity spread over the southern kingdoms. Whether this gradual invasion is to be attributed to the preponderating influence of the last three Bretwaldas, all Christians and Northumbrians, or simply to the expansive force of Celtic missionary labour, can never be discriminated. But what is distinctly visible is the influence of Celtic priests and missionaries everywhere replacing or seconding the Roman missionaries, and reaching districts which their predecessors had never been able to enter. The stream of the divine word thus extended itself from north to south, and its slow but certain course reached in succession all the peoples of the Heptarchy. Life and light infused themselves through all, and everywhere, along with the immaculate sacrifice, the hymns of a people freed from the yoke of idolatry rose towards the living God.

Let us state rapidly the progress of the pacific invasion made by the Celtic monks, trained in the school of the great Columba, into the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms south of the Humber.[1]

[1] In order to a full understanding of this chapter, the maps must be consulted.

I.—Conversion of East Anglia

We have seen how Edwin, the first Christian Bretwalda of Northumbria, employed his influence over the country where he had spent his exile to convert the king of East Anglia. Unfortunately this first conversion had not been more durable than that of Northumbria itself under Edwin. Eorpwald, the Christian king, had been assassinated soon after his conversion,[1] and this important kingdom, which comprehended so large a part of eastern England, fell back into idolatry. The singular law which made exile the cradle of the faith and the apprenticeship of royalty to so many Anglo-Saxon princes, appears among the Angles of the East as well as among those of the North. Sigebert, the brother of the murdered king, exiled in France from his youth, was there baptized, and there too had come to admire and understand monastic life. Recalled to reign over his own country, he brought thither with him at once the true faith and the life of the cloister. He was accompanied by a Burgundian bishop of the name of Felix, who placed himself under the jurisdiction of Honorius, Archbishop of Canterbury, and was by him appointed missionary bishop of the East Angles.[2] For seventeen years this foreign bishop diligently sowed the seed of eternal life in his new diocese."[3] As in Northumbria, the king and the bishop laboured in concert to extend religion and also Christian instruction, for they founded several schools for the literary education of the young English, in imitation of those that Sigebert had seen in France,

[1] In preference to the chronology of Bede's annotators, I follow, as far as regards East Anglia, that of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which is also adopted by the Bollandists in the Life of St. Felix (vol. i. Mart., p. 780).

[2] The seat of this bishopric was first established at Dunwich, then, that town having been ingulfed by the sea, was transferred successively to Elmham, to Thetford, and finally to Norwich, where it still exists.

[3] "Totam illam provinciam juxta sui nominis sacramentum, a longa iniquitate atque infelicitate liberatam, ad fidem et opera justitiæ ac perpetuæ felicitatis dona perduxit."—Bede, iii. 15.

and which Felix provided with masters obtained from the great monastic school of Canterbury.[1] The origin of the celebrated University of Cambridge has been attributed by many to these monastic schools.

But they were not content to imitate Northumbria at a distance: they entered into close relations with the new Celtic mission of that kingdom. The holy bishop Aïdan became the object of the respectful emulation of the Burgundian Felix, who, like him, had come from across the seas to evangelise the English, and who was encouraged in his respect for the Celtic abbot by the example of the Archbishop Honorius himself, notwithstanding Aïdan's obstinate attachment to Celtic custom in respect to the celebration of Easter as opposed to the Roman usage, of which the metropolitan church of Canterbury was the natural guardian in England.[2]

Ere long a Celtic missionary appeared to assist in the joint work of the king and the bishop. This was an Irish monk, named Fursy, of very noble birth, and celebrated from his youth in his own country for his knowledge and his visions. It would be pleasant, to follow the example of Bede, to pause in the tale, and leave the vicissitudes of missionary history in England, to repose ourselves for a little amidst the wonderful revelations of this famed precursor of Dante. Bede had his account of these visions from an old East Anglian monk of his community, as pious as he was truthful, who had heard the Irish saint himself recount his visions. Their character was such that this wonderful man, though but scarcely covered by a thin

[1] "Ea quæ in Gallia bene disposita vidit imitari cupiens. . . . Pædagogos ac magistros juxta morem Cantuariorum."—BEDE, iii. 18. Cf. WILHEL. MALMESB.; FLORENT. WIGORN; HENRIC. HUNTINGD.; BOLLAND., t. ii. Mart., p. 781.

[2] "Hæc dissonantia paschalis observantiæ, vivente Ædano, patienter ab omnibus tolerebatur. . . . Ab omnibus etiam qui de pascha aliter sentiebant, merito diligebatur . . . ab ipsis quoque episcopis Honorio Cantuariorum et Felice Orientalium Anglorum venerationi habitus est."—BEDE, iii. 25.

garment during the rude winters of that English coast, frozen by the east winds, was covered with perspiration at the bare recollection of the moving and frightful trances which his spirit had passed through.[1]

In the chief of these visions, which Ampère and Ozanam agree in regarding as one of the poetic sources of the *Divina Commedia*, the Irish monk was permitted to contemplate the chastisements reserved for the most abominable sins of his times. "Look," said an angel to him—"look on these four fires that consume the world: the fire of falsehood, for those that renounce the promises of their baptism; the fire of avarice, for those who prefer this world's riches to the love of Heaven; the fire of discord, for those who fear not to injure souls for trifling cause; the fire of impiety, for those who scruple not to spoil and defraud the lowly and the feeble."[2]

This Irish monk came into East Anglia, as he had gone to other countries, to serve God in preaching the Gospel; but one of his visions determined him to remain here longer than was usual to him. The eloquence of his words and the example of his virtues contributed much to the conversion of the heathen, and the confirmation of the Christians in their new faith.[3] King Sigebert received him with great respect, and gave him a large estate surrounded with wood and near the sea, where he might found a monastery. The buildings and wealth of this foundation were after-

[1] "De nobilissimo genere Scotorum. . . . Superest adhuc frater senior monasterii nostri qui narrare solet. . . . Adjiciam quia tempus hiemis erat acerrimum et glacie constrictum, cum sedens in tenui veste vir, ita inter dicendum propter multitudinem memorati timoris vel suavitatis, quasi ut media æstatis caumate sudaverat."

[2] "Hi sunt quatuor ignes qui mundum succendunt. . . . Tertius dissentionis, cum animos proximorum etiam in supervacuis rebus offendere non formidant. Quartus impietatis, cum infirmiores exspoliare et eis fraudem facere pronihilo ducunt."—*Act. SS. O. S. B.*, t. iii. p. 289.

[3] "Cupiens pro Domino, ubicumque sibi opportunum inveniret peregrinam ducere vitam. Angelica visione admonitus cœpto verbi ministerio sedulus insistere."—BEDE, iii. 19.

wards much augmented by the kings and nobles of East Anglia.[1]

At a later period, King Sigebert, who was not only a great Christian and a great philosopher for his time, but also a great warrior, harassed with the contests and troubles of his earthly royalty, resolved to occupy himself no longer with any occupation save the things of the kingdom of heaven, nor to fight except for the King Eternal.[2] Accordingly he received the tonsure, and entered as a monk the monastery which he had bestowed on his Celtic friend, the Irish Fursy.[3] He thus set the first example, among the Anglo-Saxons, of a king abandoning secular life and sovereignty to enter the cloister; and, as we shall see, his example was not fruitless.

But he was not permitted to die as he hoped in the cloister. The terrible Penda, that scourge of the Saxon confederation, and unwearied leader of the heathen, hated his Christian neighbours in the east as well as those of the north. At the head of his numerous Mercians, reinforced by the implacable British, he invaded and ravaged East Anglia with as much fury and success as had attended him in Northumbria. The East Angles, terrified and very inferior in numbers, recollecting the exploits of their old king, sought Sigebert in his cell to place him at the head of their army, his valour and warlike appearance being well known to the soldiers. It was in vain to resist; he could not but yield to the solicitations of his former subjects:

[1] At Burghcastle, in the present county of Suffolk.

[2] "Vir per omnia christianissimus atque doctissimus. . . . Tantumque rex ille cœlestis regni amator factus est, ut ad ultimum relictis regni negotiis . . . atque accepta tonsura pro æterno rege militare curaret."—BEDE, ii. 16; iii. 18.

[3] "S. Furseo dedit locum ad construendum monasterium, in quo et ipse post modum relicto regno monachus factus est."—GERVAS. DOROB., *Act. Pont. Cantuar.*, p. 1636. But Bede says that he entered a monastery *quod sibi fecerat*, and which is supposed to have been that which has since been known by the name of St. Edmundsbury.—Cf. *Liber Elicusis*, p. 14, ed. 1848.

but that he might remain faithful to his recent vows he armed himself only with a staff, not with a sword. His devotion was useless; all that he could do was to die for his faith and his country. It was thus, with his staff in his hand, that the king-monk perished at the head of his troops under the sword of the enemy.[1]

We may appropriately recall here an incident altogether analogous to this Saxon king's self-sacrifice, the hero of which was a British king fighting against the Saxons. Both had become monks, and were forced in their own despite to leave the cloister and die on the battle-field. Both are too closely connected with our subject to be passed over in silence.

Thirty years before the sacrifice of the king of East Anglia—about the year 610—Teudric, a valiant Welsh king, conqueror in all the battles waged during his reign, abdicated the throne in order to prepare by a period of penitence for death. He concealed himself in an islet formed by the picturesque course of the Wye, in the wild and solitary spot to which the more recent ruins of the Cistercian abbey of Tintern have attracted crowds of sight-seers. But in the reign of his son, the Saxons of Wessex, under king Ceolwulf, crossed the Severn, which had formed their boundary for more than a century, and ravaged the country as far as the Wye. At his people's cry of distress the generous old man left the solitude where he had lived for ten years, and once more led the Christians of Wales to battle with the pagan Saxons. He awaited the latter at the ford by which they meant to cross the river which bathed the banks of his solitude. A brilliant victory was the reward of his generous devotion. At the mere sight of the old king, armed at all points and mounted on his war-horse, a panic spread among the Saxons, long accustomed to fly

[1] "Sperantes minus animos militum trepidare, præsente duce quondam strenuissimo et eximio, sed ipse professionis suæ non immemor."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

before him; but in the flight one of them turned back and gave him a mortal blow. He perished thus in the arms of victory, his skull split open by a Saxon sword. A thousand years afterwards his heroic remains and venerated relics were identified by means of his shattered skull in the stone coffin wherein his faithful followers had buried him, at the confluence of the Severn and the Wye, six miles distant from the battle-field on which he gave up his life for the safety of his country.[1]

Anna, Sigebert's successor, sprung like him from the race of Uffa, who founded the East Anglian kingdom, had a longer and less stormy reign. Like Sigebert, he was the zealous helper of Felix and Fursy, the Burgundian bishop and the Celtic monk, in the work of converting his kingdom. Like him, he founded numerous monasteries, and like him had the honour to die fighting for his people, invaded and decimated by the hateful Penda. Though he did not become a monk like Sigebert, he left a numerous offspring destined to adopt the life of the cloister, and thus to expiate the guilty weakness of his brother, who succeeded him, and who, although himself a Christian, became the ally of the heathen Penda in his attacks upon the Christians of Northumbria.[2]

[1] F. GODWIN, *De Præsulibus Angliæ*, p. 593, ap. LINGARD, vol. i. p. 152; LAPPENBERG, p. 54; *Liber Landavensis*, p. 133, 134; LA BORDERIE, *op. cit.*, p. 54, who refers this occurrence to the year 575, while Lappenberg fixes it, after an Anglo-Saxon chronicler, on the 3rd January 610.

[2] Fursy, after having founded in East Anglia various double communities of monks and nuns according to the Celtic usage (*De Virtutibus S. Fursei*, ap. MABILLON, *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, vol. ii. p. 296), quitted the cenobitic life in order to become an anchorite. Then seeing East Anglia more and more ravaged by the incursions of the heathens of Mercia, he decreed the dissolution of his communities and departed to France, where he was well received at the court of Clovis II., that great protector of the Irish monks. He there founded the monastery of Lagny, and died in 650. We have already spoken of him among the successors of St. Columbanus in France, and we shall find his brother and his disciples among the Irish missionaries in Belgium.

II.—Conversion of Wessex

What Edwin had been to the Angles of the East, his saintly and generous successor, Oswald, was to the Saxons of the West, who under Cerdic, one of those bloodthirsty and warlike chiefs who were said to descend in a direct line from the great god Odin, had founded the most western colony of the Saxon immigration, a colony which had become a kingdom of much vaster extent than the kingdoms of the eastern or southern Saxons, or that of the Jutes of Kent. This realm, which extended from the Thames to the Severn, condemned by its position to endless struggles with the Britons of Wales and of Cornwall—a race always thrilling with patriotic hatred of the invader, and destined in the future to absorb the seven other kingdoms of the Heptarchy[1]—was governed in the time of Oswald by two brothers, Cuichelm, from whose attempt at assassination Edwin had barely escaped, and Cynegils, the father of a princess whom Oswald had asked in marriage. When Oswald came in person for his bride, he met at the residence of the king of Wessex a missionary called Birinus.[2] This bishop—who was perhaps not a monk, and whose origin is unknown—had acquired the Saxon language at Genoa, a port much frequented by the Anglo-Saxons, where the bishop of the place had consecrated him. He had been commissioned by Pope Honorius I. to continue the work of the conversion of the Saxons, and had promised in return that he would sow the seed of life even beyond the territory of the Angles, where no preacher had yet penetrated. But landing on the coast of Wessex,[3] he found the population there, which no doubt he supposed to be already Chris-

[1] "Britannos antiquæ libertatis conscientia frementes, et ob hoc crebram rebellionem meditantes."—Wilhelm. Malmesb., i. 2.

[2] "An fuerit monachus non constat."—Mabillon, in *SS. II. Sæc Prætermissis.* Cf. Surius, *De Probatis Sanctorum Vitis*, t. vi. p. 771.

[3] In the existing counties of Dorset or Hants.

tianised, still plunged in the darkness of utter Paganism, and devoted himself to their conversion, believing this to be the best way of keeping his promise.[1]

The influence of the pious and zealous Oswald came most fortunately to aid the missionary's arguments; and when King Cynegils consented with all his people to be baptized, his son-in-law became his godfather.[2] The baptism was performed at Dorchester, which was erected into a bishopric for Birinus by the twofold authority of Cynegils, as provincial king, and of Oswald, as Bretwalda, or supreme head of the Saxon confederation.[3]

The success of the mission of Birinus was rapid and complete. He founded many churches and converted multitudes. Many years after the close of his long and fruitful pontificate, popular songs intended for choral singing still celebrated the memory of the *Roman exile*,[4] who

[1] "Promittens se illo (Papa) præsente in intimis ultra Anglorum partibus quo nullus doctor præcessisset, sanctæ fidei semina esse sparsurum. . . . Sed Gewissorum gentem ingrediens, cum omnes ibidem paganissimos inveniret."—BEDE, iii. 7.

[2] "Cum rex ipse catechizatus, fonte baptismi cum sua gente ablueretur contigit . . . pulcherrimo prorsus et Deo digno consortio, cujus erat filiam accepturus in conjugem, ipsum prius secunda generatione Deo dicatum sibi accepit in filium."—BEDE, iii. 7.

[3] Not the existing county town of Dorsetshire, but a place near Oxford, on the Thames. The episcopal see was, later, transferred to Lincoln. The Saxons of Wessex had two other celebrated bishoprics—Winchester, the cathedral of which Birinus is understood to have founded; and Sherborne, afterwards transferred to Salisbury. The clergy of all these cathedrals were monks.

[4] "*Dignus honore pater* micat aureus ecce BIRINUS;
Sanctus adest omni *dignus honore pater*.
Exul ad hunc populum qui venit ab urbe Quiritum;
Pro Christo pergens, *exul ad hunc populum*. . . .
Hostica barbaries omnis sedatur in illo;
Deque lupo fit ovis *hostica barbaries*. . . .
Liber adest populus, sub longo tempore servus;
Nunc Christo famulans, *liber adest populus*. . . .
Sit benedicta dies in qua maris alta petisti;
Huc quæ te duxit, *sit benedicta dies*."

This popular song has been published from a MS. of Alençon by M.

had come to emancipate the Saxons of the West from bondage to their idols, and blessed the day which had seen him land on their coasts.

The assassin Cuichelm himself was touched, and received baptism on his deathbed, with his son. But the son of Cynegils, Cenwalch, refused to renounce the religion of his ancestors; and when he succeeded to the throne, it might have been supposed that the work of Oswald and Birinus would be overturned by one of those pagan reactions which had already thrown back into idolatry the subjects of the first Christian king of Kent, as well as the Saxons and Angles of the East. But it does not appear that the new king originated any persecution, or indeed any change whatever; and, singular to say, it was the ferocious heathen Penda who was the instrument of Divine mercy in bringing the young unbeliever to the truth which he had refused to receive at his father's conversion. The terrible king of Mercia, whose sister Cenwalch had refused, avenged that injury by declaring war against him. The new converts of Wessex were no more able than those of Northumbria or East Anglia to resist the savage energy of the Mercian pagans; Cenwalch was defeated, dethroned, and exiled. But for him, as for Oswald and Oswy, exile was the cradle of the faith. He sought refuge with the pious King Anna, and in that family of saints[1] he learned to know and to love the faith of Christ. When he was reinstated in his kingdom, he and his people held to their new religion with inviolable fidelity, and during his reign of thirty years he lent active and intelligent assistance in the extension of the

Edelestand du Méril (*Poésies Inédites du Moyen Age;* Paris, 1854, p. 277). The learned editor marks the systematic repetition of the first hemistich as a kind of refrain meant for a choir of singers. The same MS. contains poems in which he notes the same kind of rhythm, in honour of two other monastic apostles of the Anglo-Saxons—St. Ethelwald and St. Swithin.

[1] "Nam et ipse apud quem exulabat rex erat vir bonus, et bona et sancta sobole felix."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

Christian faith and of the monastic order. On the death of Birinus, who, notwithstanding his quality of missionary and bishop sent from Rome, has left no trace of his relations with the Roman colony of Canterbury, the Celtic element reappeared among the Saxons of the West, in the person of a Frank, named Agilbert, who had long studied in the Irish monasteries,[1] from which he had newly arrived when he offered himself to King Cenwalch to carry on the work of the deceased bishop. In this he acquitted himself so well that the king, delighted with his learning and activity, induced him to agree to become the bishop of the kingdom. But at the end of ten years, the same king, who understood nothing but Saxon, grew tired of listening to sermons delivered either in Latin or in that Celtic tongue which he considered barbarous. He does not, however, seem to have been animated by any systematic hostility against the British Celts, who formed a numerous class amongst his subjects; for while he fulfilled a promise made at his father's deathbed, and founded for his Saxons at Winchester the great monastery which has become one of the most important monuments of English architecture,[2] he at the same time protected and favoured the national sanctuary of the Celts at Glastonbury. A deed of gift exists in which he engages the monks of that British sanctuary to pray for the Saxon king beside the tomb of Arthur. In his reign, it is true, a Saxon for the first time became abbot of the great Celtic monastery;[3] but, on the other hand, it was also under him that the Celt Maïdulphe, a professed monk, and at the same time a distinguished philosopher,[4] came from Ireland or Scotland to lay the humble foundations of an

[1] "Venit de Hibernia pontifex quidam, nomine Agilbertus, natione quidem Gallus, sed tunc legendarum gratia Scripturarum in Hibernia non parvo tempore demoratus."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

[2] DUGDALE, *Monasticon Anglicanum.* t. i. p. 31.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[4] "Natione Scotus, eruditione philosophus, professione monachus."—WILH. MALMESB., i. 2.

abbey which preserves a trace of his name in the later splendours of Malmesbury.

Nevertheless King Cenwalch wanted a bishop who spoke Saxon,[1] and found him in the person of a certain Vini, who had been ordained in France; and for whom he constituted a new bishopric in connection with his recent monastic establishment of Winchester. Agilbert, however, instead of congratulating himself, as he ought to have done, on seeing the far too extensive field of his labours diminished, to the great profit of his flock, by the arrival of this fellow-workman native to the soil, was so irritated that he threw up his episcopate and returned to France, where he became Bishop of Paris.

The need of and wish for native bishops increased, however, more and more among the Anglo-Saxons. The first who was invested with the episcopal dignity was Ithamar, a native of Kent, who was summoned to succeed the aged Paulinus in the see of Rochester, where the latter had found an honourable retreat after his flight from Northumbria. It was the Archbishop Honorius of Canterbury, himself a Roman monk, like his four predecessors, who chose Ithamar, acknowledging him to be a man fully capable of rivalling both in knowledge and virtue the Roman bishops who had hitherto occupied the two Kentish bishoprics.[2]

The small kingdom of Kent, which owed its importance, and perhaps the maintenance of its independence, to the possession of the metropolis of Canterbury, was at this time governed by Ercombert, grandson of the first Christian king, who showed himself even more zealous than his grandsire for the new religion. He enforced the observance of Lent by severe penalties, and gave orders for a general destruction of the idols and heathen temples which had been spared for

[1] "Rex qui Saxonum tantum linguam noverat, pertæsus barbaræ loquelæ, subintroduxit in provinciam alium suæ linguæ episcopum."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

[2] "De gente Cantuariorum, sed vita et eruditione antecessoribus suis æquandum."—BEDE, iii. 14.

the previous fifty years, notwithstanding the conversion to Christianity of the great majority of the inhabitants.[1] It was in his reign that, on the death of the archbishop, the last survivor of Augustin's Italian mission, the rank of metropolitan was, after two years' hesitation and delay, conferred, for the first time, on an Anglo-Saxon. The newly converted realm of Wessex had the honour of furnishing to England her first native Primate. This fifth successor of Augustin was named Frithona, but thought fit to change that Teutonic name for the purely Roman one of *Deus-dedit*. He was consecrated by the English Ithamar, and did not hesitate to remain in friendly relations, or rather to resume intercourse, with the Celtic bishops, who up to this time had scarcely recognised the supremacy of the Church of Canterbury.[2]

III.—Conversion of the Saxons of the East

Whatever may have been the influence of the saintly King Oswald on the conversion of the West Saxons, it was assuredly less direct and less effectual than that of his brother and successor Oswy upon the Saxons of the East and the midland Angles. It must, indeed, be acknowledged that, of all the Northumbrian kings, it is Oswy, stained as he was with the innocent blood of King Oswin, who did most for the extension and defence of Christianity in England.

Sigebert, named *the Good*—king of those West Saxons whom we recently saw driving Mellitus from his bishopric in London, and renouncing the faith which had been urged on them by the preachings of that companion of Augustin, and the influence of the Bretwalda Ethelbert—was Oswy's special friend. Sigebert the Good had dethroned the posterity of those three princes who demanded the communion

[1] "Cum avus et pater citra destructionem idolorum fidem nostram coluissent."—Will. Malmesb., *De Gest. Reg. Angl.*, l. i. c. 1.

[2] Hook, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

from the hands of the Christian bishop without having been baptized.[1] He frequently came into Northumbria to visit Oswy as a friend, but doubtless also as the Bretwalda, the sovereign of the confederation, who alone was able to protect the petty kingdom of Essex against its much more powerful neighbours of Wessex and Mercia. Oswy, on those occasions, spoke much to him on the subject of idolatry; he took pains to make him understand that gods could not be made by the hand of man of stone or wood, the rest of which might be put to the vilest uses; but that rather far he should believe in a God incomprehensible and invisible, but all-powerful and eternal, able to govern the world which He has created, and which He will judge, whose throne is in heaven, and not made of worthless metal, and who promises everlasting rewards to such as learn His will and do it on earth. Sigebert suffered himself to be won over by these brotherly and repeated exhortations. After long deliberation with his faithful counsellors, according to the invariable custom of the Saxon kings, and fortified by their unanimous assent, he received baptism, along with his whole court,[2] at the hands of the Celtic bishop Finan, in a royal villa of the Northumbrian kings, called *Ad Murum* (on the wall), from its proximity to the famous rampart built by the Emperor Severus to restrain the incursions of the Caledonians.[3]

The new Christian was unwilling to return to his kingdom without being accompanied by missionaries commissioned to preach to his people the faith which he had just embraced. For these instructors he applied, naturally, to his friend and

[1] See above, p. 244. Compare LAPPENBERG, Genealogical Table B of vol. i.

[2] "Fidem quam olim . . . abjecerant . . . instantia regis Oswin receperunt . . . frequenter solebat eum hortari . . . hæc et hujus modi multa cum rex Oswin regi Sigeberto amicabili et quasi fraterno consilio sæpe inculcaret; tandem juvante amicorum consensu credidit, et facto cum suis consilio cum exhortatione, faventibus cunctis et adnuentibus fidei baptizatus est."—BEDE, iii. 22.

[3] *Ad Murum.* This spot is believed to have been at Walton, or rather at Wallbottle, near Newcastle.

brother the king, whom he regarded as the author of his own conversion. Oswy gave him a monk of the great Celtic Monastery of Lindisfarne, named Cedd, a Northumbrian by birth, who had already distinguished himself in a mission to the pagans of Mercia.[1] Cedd accordingly went over the whole kingdom of Sigebert, and gathered in a first and ample harvest of souls; after which he returned to Lindisfarne, to be there consecrated Bishop of the West Saxons, whose capital and episcopal see, formerly occupied by the Roman monk Mellitus, was at London. The monk of Lindisfarne succeeded where the monk of Mount Cœlius had failed. He ordained numerous priests and deacons to assist him in preaching and baptizing, and founded many churches and monasteries, in which he endeavoured to induce the best of his converts to adopt the life of the cloister, as far at least as the rudeness of their habits would permit.[2] He himself made continued journeys to Lindisfarne, in his native Northumbria, to renew his spirit, and to draw from the stern penances and bracing traditions of his order the energy he needed to cope with the difficulties of his task.[3]

The end of King Sigebert the Good shows, with sufficient plainness, the nature of those difficulties, and the combination of firmness and sagacity which was required to overcome them. One of the earls, or principal lords of the country, a near kinsman of the king, having persevered in an illicit connection in spite of the repeated representations of the

[1] BEDE, iii. 21. Compare *Act. SS. Bolland.*, t. i. Jan., p. 373.

[2] "In quibus collecto examine famulorum Christi, disciplinam vitæ regularis, in quantum rudes adhuc capere poterant, custodire docuit."—BEDE, iii. 23.

[3] "Solebat . . . sæpius etiam suam, id est Northanhymborum, provinciam exhortandi gratia, revisere."—BEDE, iii. 23. It was in one of these journeys that he was detained by the son of King Oswald, who reigned over a part of Deïra, and who had at his court as priest a brother of Cedd. This prince, Ethelwald by name, persuaded Cedd to accept an estate from him, in order to found a monastery, which might serve as the place of his burial—the Monastery of Lastingham, of which we have spoken above, p. 337.

bishop, Cedd excommunicated him, forbidding any one to enter his house or to eat with him. The king took no notice of this prohibition, and at the invitation of the earl went to dine with him. As he left the house he met the bishop. Both were on horseback, and dismounted to greet each other. The king, affrighted, threw himself at the feet of the bishop, imploring pardon for his fault. The bishop, irritated, touched him with the staff which he carried in his hand, and said to him, "Since you have not chosen to abstain from entering the house of that reprobate, there you shall die."[1] And, in fact, some time after, the same earl and his brother slew the king, whose kinsmen they were. When they were asked the reason of their crime, they assigned no other than the anger they felt at seeing the chief of their race pardon his enemies so readily—granting pardon as soon as it was asked, according to the precept of the Gospel. And certainly, adds honest Bede, we may believe that such a death sufficed, not only to expiate his disobedience to the bishop, but also to increase his merits in the sight of God.

This zealous prelate, whom we shall meet again farther on, survived his royal convert, whom he had so severely judged, and baptized Sigebert's successor. Afterwards, in one of his too frequent excursions to Northumbria, Cedd was seized with a contagious malady, and died at the Monastery of Lastingham, which he had founded, and of which one of his three brothers, like himself all priests and monks of Lindisfarne, was abbot. When the news of his death reached his diocese, thirty East Saxons, whom he had made monks, started in all haste for the north. They sought the monastery where lay the body of their father and founder, with the intention of living there near his remains, or dying and finding their last repose beside him, if such were the

[1] "Episcopus pariter desiluit: sederat enim et ipse in equo. . . . Dico tibi quia noluisti te continere a domo perditi et damnati illius, tu in ipsa domo mori habes."—BEDE, iii. 22.

will of God. Their desire was quickly granted. At the end of a few days they all died of the same disease that had cut short the bishop's life.[1] How is it possible but to esteem, in spite of his severity, a bishop capable of inspiring such a rare affection? And how, also, is it possible not to love those rough Saxons, scarce converted, but moved even in the cloister by that passionate self-devotion, by that necessity of giving life for the beloved which, in the midst of their natural fierceness, continued the distinctive feature of the Anglo-Saxon race?

Yet, notwithstanding, these same Saxons, so easily gained and attached by the light and the virtue of the Gospel, often fell back with a lamentable and surprising facility into the depths of Paganism. Bishop Cedd and his thirty friends were scarcely dead, when the people whose apostle and master he had been, apostatised almost in a body. The same disease which had taken from them their bishop, so terrified the East Saxons by its ravages that the king, nobles, and people rivalled each other in their eagerness to restore the temples and altars of offended Woden, hoping thus to ward off the contagion from themselves. Happily another king, named Sebbi, uncle and colleague of the apostate, stood firm, and succeeded in bringing back the whole nation to Christianity, with the aid of the bishop of the Mercians, a Saxon by birth, but, like so many other pontiffs and missionaries, trained by the Celtic monks of Iona and Lindisfarne.[2] The narratives of Bede, which serve to guide us across the maze of the races and dynasties of the Heptarchy, were taken by him from the lips of a priest who had accompanied this very active and zealous bishop in his unwearied journeys throughout all the corners of the kingdom of Essex, to preach the faith and raise up again the altars of Christ.

[1] "Cupientes ad corpus sui patris, aut vivere, si sic Deo placeret, aut morientes ibi sepeliri."—BEDE, iii. 23.

[2] "Iarumanus, Anglicus natione, sed a Scotis episcopis ordinatus."—*Anglia Sacra*, t. i. p. 425.

According to his testimony, the inhabitants were turned back to idolatry less by hostility against Christianity than by indifference as to the future life, of which many denied the very existence. But as soon as the churches were re-opened, a multitude of Christians reappeared, who loudly declared they would rather die in the faith of the resurrection of our Lord than live under the impure shadow of their idols.[1]

IV.—Conversion of the Mercians, or Midland English

The personal influence of King Oswy as a preacher of the Gospel, the royal villa at the foot of the old Roman wall, scene of the baptism of the first converts, and the intervention of the Celtic bishop Finan as administrator of the sacraments—all these details, which impress a special character on the conversion of the Eastern Saxons, are identically reproduced in the history of the conversion of the Mercians. But it will be understood how much more difficult and important this task must have been, when the fierceness of the bloody wars, waged during the thirty years of Penda's reign against Christian Northumbria, is considered, and especially when the vast extent of the kingdom of Mercia, almost as large as Northumbria itself, and embracing all the country that lies between the Thames, the Humber, and the Severn, is called to mind. The population of this kingdom was composed of very diverse elements, —first, of great numbers of the conquered Britons; then of Saxon settlers;[2] and, finally, of Angles, especially con-

[1] "Diligentes hanc vitam et futuram non quærentes, sive etiam non esse credentes. . . . Juxta quod mihi presbyter qui comes itineris ille et cooperator verbi extiterat, referebat. . . . Magis cum fide resurrectionis in illo mori, quam in perfidiæ sordibus inter idola vivere cupientes."—Bede, iii. 30.

[2] Among others, the Wuiccas on the west, and the Girwas on the east, who are often mentioned by the historians of the period. They had their own kings, whose charters figure among the very limited number of those whose authenticity is recognised by Kemble.

centrated on the south-west frontier of Northumbria.[1] Towards the end of his long reign, the ferocious Penda had entrusted the government of the Angles of the Middle to his eldest son Peada. It was through him that Christianity and the Northumbrian influence penetrated into Mercia, and succeeded in beginning operations upon this formidable remnant of darkness, encircled on all sides by newly Christianised states, which still offered a vast and inviolable asylum to Saxon paganism.

As elsewhere, love and marriage had a certain part to play in this revolution. During one of those truces which the sagacious policy of Oswy continued to obtain for ill-starred Northumbria, always bathed in blood or wrapt in flames by the implacable chief of the Mercians, the young Peada, who had all the virtues and all the external advantages which the Saxons prized most highly in their kings, came into Northumbria to ask the hand of Alchfleda, the daughter of Oswy. Oswy replied that he could not give his daughter to an idolater, and that, in order to win her, Peada and the nation of Angles governed by him must be converted and baptized. The young prince then put himself under instruction, most probably by Bishop Finan; and from the moment when he understood the teachings, and especially the promises, of the Christian faith, the hope of the resurrection, and of that future and everlasting life which the Saxons of the East had been so unwilling to admit, he declared that he would become a Christian, even though the princess whom he sought to wed were refused to him.[2] But Peada seems to have been drawn towards the light of truth even less by his love to Alchfleda than by

[1] These Angles bore the name of *Middle Angles*, or English of the Middle, to distinguish them from the East Angles, or Angles of the East.

[2] "Juvenis optimus, ac regis nomine ac persona dignissimus . . . nisi fidem Christi et baptisma cum gente cui præerat, acciperet. At ille, audita prædicatione veritatis, et promissione regni cœlestis, speque resurrectionis ac futuræ immortalitatis, libenter se Christianum fieri velle confessus est, etiamsi virginem non acciperet."—BEDE, iii. 21.

his friendship for Alchfrid, the brother of the princess. Alchfrid was already his brother-in-law, having married the king of Mercia's daughter, in whom he had found not only a Christian, but a saint,[1] destined to confirm by a new example the providential law, which, amidst the descendants of Odin, selected those who were most marked by the obstinacy and ferocity of their paganism as the progenitors of a race of saints, and especially of saintly women. It would be desirable to have fuller details of the circumstances which brought these two young princes together, and made them friends and brothers before they became related by marriage. We know only that it was Alchfrid who, of all the preachers of the truth, exercised the strongest influence upon the convictions of his friend. The future king of the Mercians received baptism from Bishop Finan at the villa near the Roman wall, on the same spot, and almost at the same date, as the king of the West Saxons. The eorls, the thanes, and the men of war (called at a later period counts, lords, and knights) who had accompanied the young Peada to the Northumbrian court, were baptized along with him, as were also their servants.[2]

When the Mercian prince, carrying back with him his young wife, returned a Christian from a country which had already been christianised for twenty years, his companions formed a most precious and effectual nucleus for the complete conversion of Mercia. Oswy had added to their party, in the capacity of missionaries, four monks trained at Lindisfarne, and endowed with the knowledge and virtues which seemed to him needful for the evangelising of the new province which was to be won over to Christianity. Three of them were Anglo-Saxons, and

[1] Her name, like that of the wife of the heroic Oswald, was Kyneburge, and, later, she became a nun along with her sister Kyneswitha.

[2] "Persuasus maxime ad percipiendam fidem a filio regis Oswin . . . qui erat cognatus et amicus ejus . . . Baptizatus cum omnibus qui secum venerant comitibus ac militibus eorumque famulis universis."—BEDE, iii. 21.

among these three was Cedd, whom Oswy almost immediately recalled, to entrust him with the mission to the Eastern Saxons. The fourth, named Diuma, was a Celt by birth, and it was he who became the first bishop of the Mercians. These missionaries obtained a rapid and unhoped-for success. The Middle Angles listened to them with manifest sympathy, and every day the nobles and the common people flocked in great numbers to be baptized.[1]

The behaviour of the savage Penda to his newly converted son and his companions was as singular as it was unexpected. It was to have been looked for that this fierce and unwearied enemy of the Christian kings and nations near him would become the violent persecutor of his own Christian subjects. But it was not so; and, indeed, the history of his frightful ravages in Northumbria and elsewhere records no special indication of enmity against the Christians: no doubt he did not spare them, but there is no proof of his having persecuted them with a peculiar hatred. As to his own kingdom, not only did he take no steps to punish his eldest son and the other converts, but he allowed the Northumbrian missionaries freely to preach the Gospel to all who wished to hear them in those districts, the exclusive sovereignty of which he had reserved to himself. This barbarian ravager and pagan gave thus an example of toleration by which many Christians in ages more enlightened than his might be profited. He confined himself to evincing haughtily his dislike and contempt for those who, after having received the faith of Christ, did not practise its works. "Those who despise," said he, "the laws of the God in whom they believe, must be despised as wretches."[2]

[1] "Qui ad docendam baptizandamque gentem illius, et eruditione et vita videbantur idonei . . . prædicabant verbum et libenter auditi sunt, multique quotidie nobilium et infimorum, abrenuntiatâ sorde idolatriæ, fidei sunt fonte abluti."—BEDE, iii. 21.

[2] "Nec prohibuit Penda rex quin etiam in sua, hoc est, Merciorum natione, verbum, si qui vellent audire, prædicaretur. Quin potius odio habebat et despiciebat eos quos fide Christi imbutos, opera fidei non

Penda, however, continued none the less the pitiless foe of the princes and people of Northumbria. This bloodthirsty and stubborn hatred led him to his destruction.

It was only at the last extremity that Oswy resolved to engage in a final conflict with the terrible enemy who had conquered and slain his two predecessors, Edwin and Oswald. It has been seen that he married his son and his daughter to children of Penda; and he gave him another of his sons as a hostage. But Penda would not consent to any durable peace. During the thirteen years that had elapsed since the overthrow of Oswald and the accession of Oswy, he had periodically subjected Northumbria to frightful devastations. In vain Oswy, driven to desperation, offered him all the jewels, ornaments, and treasures of which he could dispose, as a ransom for his desolated and hopeless provinces. The arrogant and fierce octogenarian refused everything, being resolute, as he said, to exterminate the whole Northumbrian race, from first to last. "Well, then," said Oswy, "since this heathen contemns our gifts, let us offer them to one who will accept them—to the Lord our God."[1] He then made a vow to devote to God a daughter who had just been born to him, and at the same time to give twelve estates for the foundation of as many monasteries. After this he marched at the head of a small army against Penda, whose troops were, according to Northumbrian tradition, thirty times more numerous. Besides his Mercians, Penda led to battle a crowd of auxiliaries under the command of thirty chiefs who bore the title of king; first of all, the implacable Britons, his constant allies against the Angles of the North; then a body

habere deprehendit, dicens contemnendos esse eos et miseros qui Deo suo quem crederent obedire contemnerent."—BEDE, iii. 21.

[1] "Cum acerbas atque intolerabiles pateretur irruptiones . . . dummodo ille provincias usque ad internecionem vastare desineret . . . qui totam ejus gentem a parvo usque ad majorem delere atque exterminare decreverat. . . . Si paganus nescit accipere nostra donaria, offeramus ei qui novit, Domino nostro Deo."—BEDE, iii. 24.

of East Anglians; and finally, by an inexcusable treason against his country and his uncle, the nephew of Oswy, the son of his brother, who had been killed by Penda, the same Ethelwald who reigned over a portion of Deïra.

Notwithstanding the enormous disparity of the forces, the battle, which was fought on the banks of a river near the site of the present town of Leeds, was lost by Penda. The traitor Ethelwald sought safety in flight as soon as the struggle commenced, but the other allies, Britons and East Anglians, were exterminated. The vanquished in their flight found the river in flood, so that a larger number perished in the waters than by the sword. Penda was slain fighting valiantly in the *mêlée*. Thus perished at the age of eighty years, after a reign of thirty, the conqueror and murderer of five Anglo-Saxon kings,[1] the last and indefatigable champion of paganism among the Anglo-Saxons, the ally and too effective instrument of the vengeance of the old British Christians against their converted invaders.[2]

This battle decided the fate of England: it not only ensured the emancipation and temporary preponderance of Northumbria; but it put a period to the struggle which for 200 years the British had maintained against the Anglo-Saxons. Henceforth there might be partial resistance and local conflicts, but there was no general attempt, with any chance of success, to repel the progress of invasion. All the little British kingdoms which occupied the existing counties of Chester, Lancashire, and Westmoreland, on the coast of the Irish Channel, were finally swept away and taken possession of by the Saxons of Northumbria.[3]

[1] Two kings of Northumbria, Edwin and Oswald; and three of East Anglia, Sigebert, Egeric, and Anna.

[2] "Fertur quia tricies majorem pagani habuerint exercitum . . . triginta legiones ducibus nobilissimis instructas . . . duces regii triginta qui ad auxilium venerant pene omnes interfecti."—BEDE. Compare LA BORDERIE, *op. cit.*, pp. 223–25. The battle-field is now called Winn Moor, and the river the Broad Arc.

[3] LA BORDERIE, *op. cit.*, p. 227. Cumbria alone remained to them:

Farther, it sealed the political and military triumph of the new religion, in the very bosom of the Heptarchy, over that external and official paganism which was the religious tradition of the nation. But this triumph was far from being sufficient for the designs of God, and for the deliverance of the souls of men. There was an inner paganism, infinitely more difficult to overcome—the paganism of the savage morals and uncurbed passions of a conquering race. The valiant sword of the Northumbrians might well gain the mastery over oppressors and ravagers; but the word, and above all, the virtue, of the monks was needed to propagate and consolidate the faith, and root it deeply in the heart and life of the victors.

Oswy faithfully kept his word to God and to the Christian people. He set apart the twelve estates to be thenceforth monastic property—six in the north and six in the south of his double kingdom—to form an endowment for monks who should substitute for the warlike service by which these domains were usually held an unceasing prayer for eternal peace.[1] He then took his daughter Elfleda, who was but yet a year old, and consecrated her to God by the vow of perpetual virginity. Her mother, the daughter of Edwin, first Christian king of Northumbria, had been thus dedicated to God from her birth, but only by baptism, and as a token of the gratitude of a still pagan father for the protection of the Christians' God. The daughter of Oswy was to be the price of a yet greater gift of heaven—the conclusive victory of his race, and of the Christian faith in his country: the sacrifice thus imposed on her reminds us of that of Jephthah's daughter. It will be seen that, far from desiring to

the country of the Kymri or Cumbrians, now Cumberland, formed a small kingdom which recovered its independence after the death of Oswy's sons, and maintained it till the tenth century, like the other small British kingdom of Strathclyde, between the Solway and the wall of Severus.

[1] "In quibus, ablato studio militiæ terrestris ad exercendam militiam cœlestem, supplicandumque pro pace ejus æterna, devotioni sedulæ monachorum locus facultasque suppediteret."—BEDE, iii. 24.

escape her vow, she showed herself, during a long life, always worthy of her heavenly bridegroom. The king took her from the caresses of her mother, to entrust her, not, as we might have supposed, to his sister the Abbess Ebba of Coldingham, but to Hilda, a princess of the rival dynasty, who nearly ten years before had been initiated into monastic life by Bishop Aïdan.

After the overthrow of Penda, Oswy, now master of Mercia, in right of his victory, undertook with his accustomed zeal to effect the conversion of that kingdom. He left a portion of it to his son-in-law Peada, the son of his terrible opponent, whose ardour in the Christian cause seconded all his efforts for the extension of the true faith. The monk Diuma, born in Ireland, and one of the four missionaries whom Peada had brought from Northumbria at the time of his marriage, was consecrated by the Bishop of Lindisfarne, and appointed Bishop of all Mercia, including therein the nation of the Middle Angles already converted under Peada. It was necessary that two distinct races should thus be united in one diocese, because of the small number of priests who were worthy of promotion to the episcopate.[1] The pontificate of Diuma was short, but fruitful. At his death he was succeeded by another Irishman, Ceolach, who was reckoned among the disciples of Columba, the great Celtic missionary, as coming from the monastery of Iona,[2] to which he returned after some years of a too laborious episcopate in Mercia, to seek the peace of cloistered life in that citadel of Celtic monachism. The third Bishop[3] of Mercia, Trumhere, an abbot in Northumbria, and an Anglo-Saxon by birth, came, like his brethren, from the

[1] "Paucitas enim sacerdotum cogebat unum antistitem duobus populis præfici."—BEDE, iii. 21. It should be observed that these two races were long before united under the same kings.

[2] COLGAN, *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 488.

[3] Trumhere had been abbot of the monastery of Gilling, founded by Queen Eanfleda, on the spot of her cousin King Oswyn's murder. See above, p. 313.

Celtic cloisters, and was, like them, consecrated by the Bishop of Lindisfarne.[1] His two successors, Jaruman and Ceadda, had the same origin; the one was born in Ireland, and the other, a Saxon by birth, had been ordained by the Scots.[2]

It is thus evident that the extension of Christianity and the government of the Church among the Saxons of Mercia were entirely under the influence of Scotch or Anglo-Celtic monks, disciples and spiritual descendants of St. Columba. This state of matters was not at all altered when the Mercians, rising under three of their principal chiefs, shook off the yoke of Oswy, and took as their king a youthful son of Penda, whom these three earls had kept in concealment since the overthrow of his father. They drove out the officials of the Northumbrian king, but they kept, with the bishop, the faith which had come to them from Northumbria, and which was to them now no less dear than their freedom and their reconquered frontiers. They desired, they said, to be free, with a king of their own race, on earth, without ceasing to serve Christ, the true and eternal King, so as to gain His kingdom of heaven.[3]

Twenty years later, this stubborn repugnance of the Mercians to the yoke of their Northumbrian neighbours manifested itself with painful distinctness among the monks of one of the principal monasteries of the country. It was at Bardeney, in that province of Lindsay (Lincolnshire), the conquest of which had already cost good King Oswald his life. His niece, the daughter of Oswy, had become queen of Mercia. It was her desire that this monastery, which was especially dear to her as well as to her husband, should

[1] "Diuma, natione Scotus. . . . Ceollach et ipse de natione Scotorum . . . reversus est ad insulam Hii, ubi plurimorum caput et arcem Scoti habuere cœnobium. . . . Trumheri, de natione quidem Anglorum, sed edoctus et ordinatus a Scotis."—BEDE, iii. 21, 24.

[2] "Anglicus, sed a Scotis ordinatus."—*Anglia Sacra*, vol. i. Cf. EDDIUS, *Vita S. Wilfrid.*

[3] "Ejectis principibus regis non proprii, fines suos fortiter simul et libertatem receperunt. Sicque cum suo rege liberi, Christo vero rege pro sempiterno in cœlis regno, servire gaudebant."—BEDE, iii. 24.

receive the remains of her uncle. The bones of the sainted king arrived one evening, borne in a chariot, at the gate of the monastery, but the monks refused to receive them. "We know well," said they, "that he is holy; but he is not of our country, and in other days he subdued us by force."[1] It was necessary to yield to this explosion of patriotic rancour, and the sacred body had to remain all night in the open air. The next morning the monks were told that a luminous column had descended from heaven on the car which bore the corpse of the Northumbrian king, and had been seen by all the country round about. Upon this they thought better of it, and opened the door of their church to the uncle of their protectress.

His relics thenceforth remained there revered by all. A banner of purple and gold placed over his shrine betokened his twofold dignity as saint and king. But it is not the less necessary to note this first and instinctive outburst of a local and provincial patriotism, sometimes even more powerful than the popular devotion, a new explosion of which long after brought about the murder of the pious queen who had striven so anxiously to endow Mercia with the relics of the great Northumbrian saint.[2] For the history of these times and races never allows us to forget that barbarism was always ready to reclaim its ancient rights even amidst the blossoming of Christian virtues and monastic austerities.

[1] "Quia etsi sanctum cum noverant, tamen quia de alia provincia ortus fuerat et super eos regnum acceperat, veteranis eum odiis etiam mortuum insequebatur."—BEDE, iii. 11. It is plain that this passage does not favour the interpretation of Father Faber, who sees in the conduct of the monks of Bardeney a repugnance to the Celtic rite and the Scots saints.—*Life of St. Oswald*, p. 68.

[2] "Ut regia viri sancti persona memoriam haberet æternam, vexillum ejus super tumbam auro et purpura compositum adposuerunt."—BEDE, *loc. cit.* This daughter of Oswy was named Osthryda. She frequently lived at Bardeney, where she received the visits of the neighbouring abbesses, whom she was able to interest in the veneration of her uncle. She was assassinated by the nobles of Mercia in 697. It will be seen farther on, that her husband King Ethelred afterwards became a monk.

The entire narrative is very confused, very obscure, in great measure unknown, and much forgotten. But across these darkling foundations of the primitive history of Christian races stirs everywhere a potent and heroic breath, the breath of life, of the true and noble life—that breath which has made out of the confused masses of barbarism those modern Christian nations, free and manly, among whom the place held by England is known to all.

V.

In summing up the history of the efforts made during the sixty years between the landing of Augustin and the death of Penda to introduce Christianity into England, the results may be stated thus: Of the eight kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxon Confederation, that of Kent alone was exclusively won and retained by the Roman monks, whose first attempts among the East Saxons and Northumbrians ended in failure. In Wessex and in East Anglia the Saxons of the West and the Angles of the East were converted by the combined action of Continental missionaries and Celtic monks. As to the two Northumbrian kingdoms, and those of Essex and Mercia, which comprehended in themselves more than two-thirds of the territory occupied by the German conquerors, these four countries owed their final conversion exclusively to the peaceful invasion of the Celtic monks, who not only rivalled the zeal of the Roman monks, but who, the first obstacles once surmounted, showed much more perseverance and gained much more success.

All the kingdoms of the Heptarchy have thus passed under our review except that of Sussex, or the Saxons of the South. It was the smallest of all, but one of the earliest founded;[1] and the first German invaders of the southern coast of Great Britain were notorious among all the others for their ferocity

[1] By Ælla in 477.

and their invincible vigour. Although they were next neighbours to the kingdom of Kent, the Roman missionaries, Augustin's companions, have left no trace of their presence among them, if indeed they ever tried to penetrate there. The Celtic monks, more enterprising or more persevering, made their way thither to form a first station, an advanced post, as it were, of their future army. They founded the very small monastery of Bosham, protected on one side by the sea, on the other by forests, and here vegetated five or six monks who came from East Anglia, the nearest Northumbrian province, under the leadership of an Irishman, the compatriot and disciple of that Fursy whose strange visions were everywhere narrated. There they served God as they best could, humbly and poorly; but not one of the Saxons of the country would listen to their preaching, still less adopt their manner of life.[1] This is the only example known to us of a complete failure. And yet the people of Sussex, although the last of all the Saxons to receive the Gospel, owe, as we shall see, that blessing to a monk trained in the school of the Celtic missionaries. This monk, however, by forsaking the rule of his first masters, in order to connect himself more closely with Roman tradition and authority, produced in the new Church of England a revolution which it now remains for us to record.

[1] "Monachus quidam de natione Scotorum, vocabulo Dicul, habens monasteriolum permodicum. . . . In humili et paupere vita Domino famulantes. Sed provincialium nullus eorum vel vitam æmulari vel prædicationem curabat audire."—BEDE, iv. 13. Compare iii. 19.

BOOK XII

ST. WILFRID ESTABLISHES ROMAN UNITY AND THE BENEDICTINE ORDER, 634-709.

"Sanctus haberi
Justitiæque tenax, factis dictisque mereris?
Agnosco procerem."—JUVENAL.

CHAPTER I

BEGINNING OF WILFRID'S CAREER—ASSEMBLY OF WHITBY

Birth and early years of Wilfrid.—Note on his biographer Eddi.—Protected by the queen of Northumbria, he enters at Lindisfarne, then goes to Rome, where no Anglo-Saxon had yet been.—He passes by Canterbury and stops at Lyons, where he separates from his companion Benedict Biscop, and where the archbishop wishes to give him his niece in marriage.—Wilfrid at Rome.—In returning by Lyons he receives the Romish tonsure and escapes, against his will, from martyrdom.—Returned to England, he becomes the intimate friend of Alchfrid, son of King Oswy.—New monastery founded at Ripon, from whence the monks of the Celtic ritual are expelled.—Popularity of Wilfrid.—He is ordained priest by a French bishop.—Southern Ireland had already adopted the Romish computation for the celebration of Easter.—The dispute on this question revived by Wilfrid in Northumbria, and division of the royal family.—The King Oswy follows the Celtic ritual; his wife and son that of Rome.—Importance and nature of the Pascal difference.—Moderation of the Romish Church throughout the dispute.—A rivalry of influence mingles with the ritualistic dispute.—Assembly of Whitby, convoked by the king to end the controversy: composition of the assembly: the two chambers: principal persons; on the side of the Celts, the abbess Hilda and her two communities, the Bishops of Lindisfarne and London; on the side of Rome, the young King Alchfrid, the old deacon James, and Wilfrid.—The authority of Columba unwisely invoked.—The king pronounces for the Romish Easter, and the assembly ratifies his decision.—Bishop Colman protests, abdicates, and returns to Iona, carrying with him the bones of his predecessor St. Aïdan, the Celtic apostle of Northumbria.

WHILE the bishops and monks of Celtic origin were gradually establishing their authority, together with that of the Christian faith, in the greater part of the land of the Heptarchy, protected by the ægis of the Northumbrian kings, and without any ostensible relation either with Rome or with the Roman colony and its official metropolis of Canterbury, a

young Anglo-Saxon, destined to transform the Church of England, was growing up unknown. More powerful than the missionaries sent from Rome, it was to be given to him, after many a struggle and many a defeat, to extend the authority of the Holy See over all Anglo-Saxon Christianity, to re-establish, even to his own prejudice, the supremacy of the metropolitan see instituted by Gregory, and to substitute everywhere the rule of St. Benedict for the observances and ascendancy of the sons of St. Columba.[1]

This young man was named Wilfrid, and belonged by birth to the highest nobility of Northumbria. He was born in 634, the day after the death of King Edwin, the flight of Bishop Paulinus, and the apparently irreparable downfall of the Romish mission in the north of England.

[1] The life of Wilfrid was written by one of his companions, the monk Eddi, surnamed Stephen, whose work is regarded as the most ancient monument of Anglo-Saxon literature after those of St. Adhelm. Venerable Bede did not write till later. He was evidently acquainted with the text of Eddi, which he has sometimes reproduced, but without quoting him, while extenuating to the utmost all the wrongs attributed to the bishops and kings with whom Wilfrid had to contend. This life, so curious and so important for the ecclesiastical history of the seventh century, had remained unknown to Mabillon and the Bollandists when they published, the former his volume of the Acta of this century in 1672, and the latter their third volume of April in 1675. Some time afterwards Mabillon was informed that the MS. of Eddi was found in the Cottonian Library at Oxford. It was communicated to him by Gale, a learned Englishman, and he published it in the supplement of his fifth volume. Gale republished it soon after in his collection of the *Scriptores Historiæ Britanniæ XV.* (Oxonii, 1691), with the new chapters discovered in a manuscript at Salisbury. They were reprinted by Mabillon in the last volume of his *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti*, with a warm and touching homage to his English correspondents: "Sic integrum exhibemus opus tamdiu desideratum omnibus litteratis, qui humanissimis et clarissimis viris Bernardo et Gaelo gratias mecum habebunt immortales." After this contemporary author, and Bede, who follows him so closely, the life of Wilfrid was written in Latin verse by an English Benedictine of the ninth century named Fridegod, whose poem, though ridiculous in style, contains some new details; then in the twelfth century by the celebrated Eadmer and by William of Malmesbury. Cf. *Act. SS. O. B.*, vol. iii. p. 150, and vol. v. p. 632. The collection called *Lives of the English Saints*, published by the Puseyites in 1844, contains a *Life of St. Wilfrid* by the Rev. Mr. Faber, who died an Oratorian in 1864.

Of him, as of all the greater saints, and especially of St. Columba and St. Bernard, it is related that his birth was accompanied by a prophecy of his future glory. The house where his mother lay appeared all at once enveloped in a flame which seemed to reach to heaven. The frightened neighbours rushed to extinguish the fire, when they were met by the attendants of the new mother, who said to them, "Be at ease, it is not a fire, but only this child who is just born." Such a prodigy naturally drew attention to the infant, and all the more because his father was one of the principal nobles of the country, and the boy himself, as he grew up, displayed a singularly gracious nature. While he was still in the cradle, he lost his pious mother, and his father having married a second time, he resolved at thirteen years of age to escape the persecutions of a harsh and haughty stepmother by leaving home and devoting himself to God. For this the consent, not only of his father, but also of King Oswy, as chief of the nation, was necessary. At his age a young Anglo-Saxon noble was already treated as a man; he asked and obtained accordingly from his father a suit of armour, with horses and servants in sufficient number to enable him to appear at court in a manner worthy of his rank. Thus equipped he went to seek, not King Oswy, but his queen. He found her surrounded by the leaders of the nobility whom he was accustomed to see and to wait upon at his father's house, and who were already disposed in his favour on account of his intelligence and modesty. They presented him to the young queen, who was only seven or eight years older than himself, and whose heart he gained as much by his youthful grace as by the refinement and truthfulness of his intellect.[1]

[1] "De inclyta gentis Anglorum prosapia . . . nobilitate natus."—EADMER, *Vita*, n° 4. "De utero matris suæ valde religiosæ. . . . Omnes concito cursu pavidi advenerunt. . . . Sustinete . . . ecce modo infans hic natus est. . . . Omnibus in domum patris sui venientibus aut regalibus sociis aut eorum servis edocte ministravit. . . . Privigna (*novercæ*, FRIDEGODUS) enim molesta et immitis. . . . Pergens itinere usquedum invenirent

The queen herself was no other than that Eanfleda whose baptism, it may be remembered, had given the signal for the conversion of Northumbria,[1] and who had been the first Christian of the kingdom. Her father was the martyr King Edwin, and her mother Ethelburga, daughter of the royal convert of Augustin, who still lived in the monastery of Lymington, where she had passed her widowhood in retirement. Eanfleda herself was destined to end her days in the cloister under the crosier of that daughter whom she dedicated to God in order to obtain the defeat of the tyrant Penda. The antecedents and the character of the queen of Northumbria naturally influenced her in favour of the young noble's desire. She granted him, or prevailed with her husband to grant him, authority to renounce all public and military service in order to enter upon a religious life, in which she promised to watch over him. She then confided him to the care of a favourite follower of the king, who himself afterwards retired from the world. This aged warrior conducted his young and noble charge to the great monastic sanctuary of Northumbria at Lindisfarne. There Wilfrid won all hearts as he had won the queen's. His humility and ardour for monastic rule, no less than his passion for study, marked him out for the affectionate admiration of the cenobites. He soon learned the whole Psalter in the version of St. Jerome, and made the contents of all the other books which he found in the library of the monastery, his own.[2]

Thus the years of his youth flowed on at Lindisfarne; but before he yielded the half of his long hair to the scissors, which, cutting bare the upper part and front of his head,

reginam regis . . . et per nobiles viros quibus ante in domo patris sui ministrabat laudatus præsentatusque est reginæ . . . erat decorus adspectu et acutissimi ingenii."—EDDIUS, c. 1, 2. "Ut merito a majoribus quasi unus ex ipsis amaretur, veneraretur, amplecteretur."—BEDE, v. 19.

[1] See above, p. 261.

[2] "Concedit in quod petierit, ut sub suo consilio et munimine serviret. . . . Quidam nobilis ex sodalibus regis valde sibi amabilis et fidelis, Cudda. . . . Omnibus statim in amore factus est. . . . Omnem psalmorum seriem memorialiter et aliquantos libros didicit."—EDDIUS, c. 2.

would have impressed on him the monastic tonsure according to the Irish fashion, he began to find out that all was not perfect in those Celtic rules and traditions of which Lindisfarne was the centre and stronghold in England. With a sagacity much admired by his historians, he determined to make a journey which no other Anglo-Saxon had yet undertaken, and to go to Rome, not merely to obtain the remission of his sins and the blessing of the Mother of the Churches, but also to study the monastic and ecclesiastical observances which were followed under the shadow of the See of St. Peter. The monks of Lindisfarne being informed by their pupil of this extraordinary project, not only used no attempts at dissuasion, but actually encouraged him to accomplish it;[1] nothing could better prove their good faith and implicit subordination to Catholic unity. Wilfrid then went to ask his father's blessing, and to confide his plans to his royal protectress. Queen Eanfleda, who, after the murder of her father, had taken refuge in the country of her mother at Canterbury, was too much the spiritual daughter of the Romish missionaries not to approve of Wilfrid's design. She sent him with warm recommendations to her cousin-german Ercombert, king of Kent,[2]

[1] "Adhuc laicus capite. . . . Adhuc inattritam vitam genti nostræ tentare in cor adolescentis ascendit."—EDDIUS, c. 23. "Necdum quidem adtonsus, verum eis quæ tonsura majores sunt virtutibus, humilitatis et obedientiæ non mediocriter insignitus. . . . Animadvertit paulatim adolescens animi sagacis, minime perfectam esse virtutis viam quæ tradebatur a Scottis proposuitque animo venire Romam, et qui ad sedem apostolicam ritus ecclesiastici sive monasteriales servarentur, videre. . . . Laudaverunt ejus propositum eumque id . . . perficere suadebant."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

[2] Ethelbert, first Christian king, died in 613,
married Bertha, granddaughter of St Clotilde.

Eadbald reigned from 616 to 640.	Ethelburga, wife of Edwin, king of Northumbria.
Ercombert reigned from 640 to 664.	Eanfleda, born 626, wife of Oswy, king of Northumbria.

praying that prince to keep the young pilgrim with him until he should be able to find suitable companions for so long a journey.

On his arrival at Canterbury Wilfrid exercised the same fascination upon the king of Kent as upon all those who had known him from his childhood. Seeing the young and handsome Northumbrian wholly given up to prayer and study, Ercombert conceived for him the most ardent attachment, and kept him at his court for a whole year. Wilfrid took advantage of this interval to study and adopt the Romish usages as they could be learned in the Roman colony at Canterbury, which was still governed by a missionary brought over by St. Augustin, Archbishop Honorius, now his fourth successor. He took the trouble to substitute, in his happy and flexible memory, the fifth edition of the old version of the Psalter, which was then used in Rome, for the version corrected by St. Jerome, which he had learned by heart at Lindisfarne, and which was used in the Celtic Church as well as in the Churches of Gaul and Germany.[1] Meantime the queen of Northumbria, impatient for the return of her favourite, urged upon King Ercombert that Wilfrid should commence his pilgrimage, and soon afterwards the monarch gave him leave to depart, sending with him another young Northumbrian noble, Biscop Baduging, equally distinguished by his zeal for study, equally inflamed with the desire of visiting Rome, and whom, under the name of Benedict Biscop, we shall afterwards see filling an important part in the monastic history of his own province.

Thus they started; and it is easy to imagine the joy and

[1] "Rex vero . . . servum Dei . . . mirifice diligebat . . . Psalmos quos prius secundum Hieronymum legerat, more Romanorum juxta quintam editionem memorialiter transmutavit. . . . Secundum petitionem reginæ languentis tædio. . . . Perrexit cum benedictione parentum suorum. . . . Omnibus affabilis . . . corpore strenuus . . . pedibus velox . . . tristia ora nunquam contraxit . . . alacer et gaudens navigio."—EDDIUS, c. 3. "Supervenit illo alius adolescens de nobilibus Anglorum."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

ardour of these young and brave Christians, when, after having rapidly crossed the Straits, they began their journey through France. Wilfrid especially, with all the enthusiasm of his age, pursued his way, strong and unwearied, with an affability and gaiety which nothing could alter. His companion, a little older, was of a more austere temper; thus it was impossible that they should long agree.[1] On their arrival at Lyons, Biscop proceeded immediately to Rome, while Wilfrid remained some months with the Archbishop Delphinus. Here also was displayed the marvellous empire which this youth obtained over the hearts of the most different persons, from the young queen of his own country and the warlike comrades of his father, to this Gallo-French prelate, who was so charmed with him, with the pure and candid soul which was well reflected in the serene beauty of his countenance, that he offered to adopt him as his son, giving him his niece in marriage, and the government of the whole of an adjoining province. But Wilfrid replied, "I have made a vow; I have left, like Abraham, my kindred and my father's house in order to visit the Apostolic See, and to study there the rules of ecclesiastical discipline, that my nation may profit by them. But if God gives me life I will return this way and see you again."

The archbishop, recognising the earnest sincerity of his vocation, let him depart for Rome with all his suite; for the young and high-born Northumbrian did not travel as a simple pilgrim, but with all kinds of guides and baggage.[2]

[1] "Decedente ab eo austeræ mentis duce."—EDDIUS, c. 3.

[2] "Videns in facie serena quod benedictam mentem gerebat. . . . Si manseris mecum fiducialiter, dabo tibi vicinam partem Galliarum ad regendum virginemque filiam fratris mei in uxorem, et te ipsum adoptivum filium habebo. . . . Sunt vota mea Domino . . . ut visitem sedem apostolicam et ecclesiasticæ disciplinæ regulas didicerim in augmentum regis nostræ. . . . Cum ducibus et opibus."—EDDIUS, c. 4. "Cunctis simul quæ necessitas poscebat itineris largiter subministratis."—BEDE, *loc. cit.* This Archbishop Delfin or Delphinus is one of the most disputed personages in the history of the seventh century; see the article consecrated to him by the Bollandists in vol. vii. of September, pp. 720 to 744. It is

On entering Rome, his first thought was to hurry to the Church of St. Andrew, from whence Augustin and the first missionaries to England had set out. Kneeling before the altar, where there was a copy of the Gospels, he implored the Apostle St. Andrew, for the love of that God whom he had confessed by his martyrdom, to open his mind, and to atone for the rustic plainness of his Saxon tongue by giving him grace to study, to understand, and to teach the English nation the eloquence of the Gospel. After which, as he began to visit, one by one, all the sanctuaries of the Eternal City, he met with a wise and holy man, Archdeacon Boniface, one of the principal counsellors of the Pope, who took pleasure in instructing the young stranger as his own child, carefully explaining to him the four Gospels, the ecclesiastical discipline, and the calculation of Easter, which the Celts of Britain and Ireland refused to admit. Finally, he presented him to the Pope, to whom he explained the object of the journey of this youthful servant of God: the Pontiff placed his hand upon the head of the young Englishman, blessed, and prayed for him. Thus Wilfrid left Rome, assuredly without suspecting the harsh and cruel trials which were fated to bring him back thither so often again.[1]

In returning from Rome, Wilfrid, as he had promised, again stopped at Lyons to see the archbishop, who received him with all his former tenderness, still insisting upon making him his heir. He even remained three whole years with this prelate, occupied in completing his ecclesiastical education among the learned doctors whom he found at

he who is venerated in the diocese of Lyons under the name of St. Annemond or St. Chamond.

[1] "De remissione peccatorum suorum, pro qua instantius orabat, per hoc certificari postulabat, si de ingenii sui tarditate et linguæ suæ rusticitate, ipsius interventu, absolvi mereretur."—RICARDI HAGULSTADENSIS, *Hist.*, c. 3. "Ut pro sua intercessione Dominus ei legendi ingenium et docendi in gentibus eloquentiam Evangeliorum concedisset. . . . Qui ponens manum benedictam super caput adolescentuli servi Dei, cum oratione benedixit eum."—EDDIUS, c. 5. The Pope was probably Eugenius I., elected in 654, during the exile of the holy martyr Pope Martin I.

Lyons, as if his desire had been to arm himself completely against Celtic usages, by comparing the teaching received at Rome with the venerable traditions of the earliest Gallican Church. Here, too, he received from the hands of the archbishop the tonsure which he preferred, no longer that Celtic tonsure which shaved the top and front of the head, from one ear to the other, leaving the hair to hang down behind, which the Romans, it is not known why, called the tonsure of Simon the Magician; nor the Oriental tonsure, which completely bared the head, and which was believed to be that of St. Paul; but the Roman tonsure, that of St. Peter, which removed all the hair except a circle round the skull, representing the form of the crown of thorns.

The extreme importance attached to this difference of tonsure, puerile and insignificant as it is in our eyes, will no longer astonish us when we remember the great significance of long hair among all barbarous races, and above all among our Merovingians. Long hair in men was not only the mark of royal or very noble birth, but also a sign of power, daring, and pride. Apart even from the question of ritual unity, Wilfrid and the Romans, without doubt, saw in the persistence of the Celts in wearing long hair, at least at the back of their heads, a vestige of pride and want of discipline incompatible with the ecclesiastical profession, and especially with the life of the cloister.

Wilfrid's visit to Delphinus was cut short by the death of the archbishop, who perished a victim to the tyranny of Ebroïn, then governor of Neustria and Burgundy in the name of the Regent Bathilda, the French queen, once an English slave, who was afterwards to become a nun and a saint. Delphinus was seized in his metropolitan city by the soldiers of Ebroïn, who dragged him to Chalons, and there put him to death. Wilfrid followed him, in spite of the entreaties of the martyr; with the incomparable enthusiasm and heroism of youth he hoped to partake the fate of his protector. "What could be better," he said,

"than to die together, father and son, and to be with Christ?" After the murder of the archbishop, when Wilfrid, stripped of his vestments, waited his turn, the chiefs of the party asked who this handsome youth, so eager for death, might be? and when they were told that he was a foreigner, of the race of those famous conquerors of Great Britain who were feared all over the world, they resolved to spare him. After this, as soon as he had superintended the burial of his spiritual father, he returned to England.[1]

These details may perhaps appear too minute; but they will be pardoned on account of the interest which attaches to the early years of a man destined to exercise, throughout half a century, a preponderating influence over his country, and, through her, over the power and freedom of the whole Church. Nor is it a matter without interest to seize in their very birth the manifestations of that mysterious and disinterested attraction which drew towards Rome, and towards Roman ideas and practices, this noble and daring scion of a barbarous race, this champion whose impassioned constancy contributed so powerfully in the future to link the destinies of England, and, by her means, of Germany and the whole west, to the foot of the apostolic throne.

On his return to England, Wilfrid, from the first, by the crown-like form of his tonsure, set up a visible and permanent protest against the ascendancy of Celtic customs. He thus signified his intention to enter upon the struggle as soon as the opportunity should present itself. It is not known whether he returned to Lindisfarne—at any rate he did not remain there. He was soon summoned to the

[1] "Amor magis ac magis crescebat inter eos. . . . A doctoribus valde eruditis multa didicit. . . . Tonsuræ de ore apostoli formulam, in modum coronæ spineæ caput Christi cingentis . . . libenter suscepit. . . . Nihil est melius quam pater et filius simul mori et esse cum Christo. . . . Quis est iste juvenis formosus qui se præparat ad mortem? . . . Transmarinus de Anglorum gente ex Britannia. . . . Parcite illi et nolite tangere eum." —EDDIUS, c. 6. "Quod tunc temporis magno terrori quamplurimis erat, sua scilicet Anglorum natio."—EADMER, n. 11.

court of the young Alchfrid, son of King Oswy, whom the latter had just associated in the kingdom. We have already noticed the touching friendship of Prince Alchfrid for the son of the cruel enemy of the Northumbrians, Penda of Mercia, and his influence on the conversion of the Mercians.[1]

This young prince, the son of a father who had been instructed in the school of the Scottish monks, and of a mother baptized and educated by the Romish missionaries, had inclined from his cradle to the religious exercises of his mother. He had always loved and sought to follow the Roman rules. At the news that the favourite of his mother, the young and noble Wilfrid, already so well known by his piety at Lindisfarne, had arrived from Rome, and was teaching the true Easter with all the regulations of the Church of St. Peter, Alchfrid sent for him, received him like an angel come from God, and fell at his feet to demand his blessing. Then, after discussing thoroughly the usages of the Roman Church, he conjured him, in the name of God and St. Peter, to remain with him, and instruct both himself and his people. Wilfrid willingly obeyed. To the

[1] Most historians have confounded this Alchfrid, eldest son of Oswy, with his younger brother Aldfrid. Bede, however, has carefully distinguished them by the orthography of their names, and Lappenberg has put this distinction beyond a doubt. Alchfrid, the eldest, who married a daughter of Penda in 653 and was the friend of Wilfrid, died before his father; Aldfrid, probably a natural son of Oswy, educated and for a long time protected at Iona, only returned to succeed Egfrid, the second son and successor of Oswy, and to be the implacable adversary of Wilfrid. See the genealogical table in the Appendix. It must be allowed, however, that the confusion which prevails throughout the primitive history of the Anglo-Saxons is greatly augmented by the fondness they had for giving to the children of one family names almost identical: thus, Oswald, Oswin, Oswulf, Osred, Osric, Ostrytha, in the dynasty of Northumbrian kings; Sebert, Sigebert, Sigehere, Sigeherd, in that of the kings of Essex; Ceawlin, Ceolric, Ceolwulf, Ceanwalch, Ceadwalla, in that of the kings of Wessex; Penda and Peada in Mercia, &c. This custom was not peculiar only to the royal families; the Bishop Ceadda had three brothers, Cedd, Cælin, and Cynnbill, all monks like himself.

irresistible attraction which, in his earliest youth, he had exercised over all hearts, there was now joined the authority of a man who had travelled, studied, and seen death and martyrdom close at hand. This increase of influence did but increase the affection of Alchfrid. The young prince and the young monk, one in soul, became still more one in heart; they loved each other with a passionate tenderness, which every day increased. The friendship of David and Jonathan, so often quoted by monastic annalists, appeared to the Northumbrians to be reproduced in that which existed between the son of their king and his youthful countryman.[1]

Wilfrid, with his Roman tonsure, and his ideas still more Roman, could not remain at Lindisfarne. Alchfrid therefore sought not merely to retain him near to himself, but also to create for him a great monastic establishment of which he should be the head, and from whence his influence might spread itself over the Northumbrian Church.[2] The young king had already founded a new monastery at Ripon, in a fine situation, at the confluence of two rivers, and in the very heart of Deïra; he had given it to monks of the Celtic ritual, all the religious communities in the country being composed either of monks of Scottish origin or of Northumbrians educated by the Scots. The first occupants of Ripon had come from Melrose, under the conduct of abbot Eata, one of the twelve young Saxons whom St. Aïdan, the

[1] "Catholicas Ecclesiæ regulas sequi semper et amare didicerat."—BEDE, v. 19. "Audiens servum Dei. . . . Verum Pascha prædicantem et S. Petri ecclesiæ disciplinam multiplicem didicisse, quam maxime rex diligebat. . . . Mirifice anima utriusque in alterum conglutinata erat, sicut animam David et Jonathæ in alterum compaginatam legimus . . . de die in diem inter eos amor augebatur."—EDDIUS, c. 7.

[2] Eddi and Bede mention a former donation given by the young king to Wilfrid, and situated at Stanford or Stamford. But no important foundation resulted from this, and they do not even agree as to the position of the domain. We will merely remark that it supported only ten families, while that of Ripon sufficed for forty, according to the Saxon mode of valuing land.

first Celtic missionary to Northumbria, chose for his future fellow-labourers; and had among them, in the capacity of steward, a young monk named Cuthbert, who was also destined to fill a great position, and to eclipse Wilfrid himself in the devotion of the northern English.[1]

Alchfrid had endowed this foundation with a domain so large that it was inhabited by forty families. But soon, under the influence of those Roman predilections which the return of Wilfrid developed in his mind, he required the new community of Ripon to celebrate Easter at the date fixed by Rome, and to renounce the other customs in which the Celtic Church differed from that of Rome. They unanimously declared that they would rather go away and give up the sanctuary which had just been given them, than abandon their national traditions. Alchfrid took them at their word, and gave them their dismissal. Abbot Eata and the future St. Cuthbert returned to Melrose, and Wilfrid was installed in their place by his royal friend, with the express intention of thus giving him the means of propagating the rules and doctrines which he preferred. Thus the war commenced—a war of which Wilfrid did not live to see the end, although he carried it on for more than half a century.[2]

[1] "Famulus Domini Cuthbertus officio præpositus hospitum."—BEDE, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 7.

[2] Nothing can be more singular than the different manner in which the same historian gives an account of the same events in two different works. And this historian is no other than the Venerable Bede! In his *Ecclesiastical History* he seems to treat the expelled monks as obstinate rebels: "Quia illi (qui Scottos sequebantur) data sibi optione maluerunt loco cedere quam mutare suam consuetudinem et Pascha catholicum cæterosque ritus canonicos juxta Romanæ et apostolicæ ecclesiæ consuetudinem recipere, dedit (Alchfridus) hoc illi quem melioribus imbutum disciplinis ac moribus vidit."—*Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 25, v. 19. In his life of Cuthbert he honours them as the victims of an unexpected storm: "Quia fragilis est et mare freti volubilis omnis seculi status, instante subito turbine, præfatus abbas Eata cum Cuthberto et ceteris quos secum adduxerat fratribus, domum repulsus est, et locus monasterii, quod condiderat, aliis ad incolendum monachis datur." —C. 8.

Wilfrid was now at the brightest moment of his life. He employed the bounty of his friend to carry out the generous impulses of his heart, and scattered round him abundant alms: he saw the ideas so dear to him spreading and strengthening themselves; he rejoiced in the protection of a prince who was to him at once a brother and a son; and, to sum up all, he was almost as dear to the people of Deïra as to their king. The nobles and other Northumbrians idolised him, and regarded him as a prophet.[1]

The young abbot, however, was not yet a priest; and it was the earnest desire of Alchfrid that his friend should be his confessor, and remain in some degree attached to his person.[2] The whole of Northumbria was then under the rule of Colman, the Celtic Bishop of Lindisfarne; but it was not from him that Wilfrid could have willingly received the sacrament of ordination. However, at this juncture the king received a visit from Agilbert, a Frenchman by birth, educated in Ireland, who, having become Bishop of the kingdom of Wessex, had lost half of his diocese because the king of the country, weary of listening to sermons which were not in Saxon, had chosen to constitute another bishop without Agilbert's consent. He therefore, not willing to sanction this abuse of power, had renounced his see.[3] Although the king of Wessex was the intimate friend of Alchfrid, it was to the Northumbrian court that the displaced bishop first came to seek a refuge before returning to his own country. Alchfrid made known to him the virtue and good repute of Wilfrid, enlarging upon his humility, his fervour in prayer, his prudence, goodness, and sobriety —the latter being a virtue always greatly admired by the Anglo-Saxons, who practised it very little—and last, and above all, the gift which he had of commanding with autho-

[1] "Non solum rex sanctum abbatem diligebat, sed omnis populus, nobiles et ignobiles eum habebant quasi prophetam Dei, ut erat."—EDDIUS.

[2] "Desiderante rege ut vir tantæ eruditionis et religionis sibi specialiter individuo comitatu sacerdos esset ac doctor."—BEDE, v. 19.

[3] See above, p. 353. Cf. BEDE, iii. 7.

rity and preaching with clearness. "Such a man is made to be a bishop," said Agilbert, who did not hesitate to ordain him priest in his monastery at Ripon, and, as Alchfrid had requested, for the personal service of the prince and his court.[1]

The influence of Wilfrid must have grown rapidly during the four or five years which followed his return to England, and he must have displayed great energy in his attack upon the Celtic spirit of the nation, to have brought about so promptly the decisive crisis which we are about to record. It must be remarked that he alone took the initiative and the responsibility. In this conflict, the object of which was to secure the preponderance of Rome, we can find no trace of any mission or impulse whatever from Rome. The Roman colony of Canterbury, whose chief was an Anglo-Saxon, lent no direct assistance; and in Northumbria, as in the neighbouring kingdoms—converted to Christianity by Celtic apostles—Wilfrid found no aid except the recollection of the abortive efforts of the first Romish missionaries, or the limited influence possessed by priests who had accompanied princesses of the race of Hengist, when they entered by marriage other dynasties of the Anglo-Saxon descendants of Odin; unless it were the testimony of travellers who, arriving from Canterbury or France, might express their astonishment to see the northern Christians, converts of Scottish missionaries, celebrating Easter at a different time from the rest of Christendom.[2]

There was indeed one fact which might encourage him to attempt again, in another region and under circumstances far less favourable, the enterprise in which Augustin had failed. Of the four countries in which the Celtic Church reigned, Ireland, Wales, Scotland proper, and Northumbria,

[1] "Dicens virum esse . . . sobrium . . . plenum auctoritatis . . . non vinolentum . . . et bene docentem sermone puro et aperto: ideo rogo te ut imponas super eum presbyteri gradum et sit mihi comes individuus. . . . Talis utique debet episcopus fieri."—EDDIUS, c. 9.

[2] BEDE, *loc. cit.*

with their four monastic citadels of Bangor on the sea, Bangor on the Dee, Iona, and Lindisfarne, Ireland, the cradle and chief home of Celtic traditions, had begun in heart to return to Roman unity. Thirty years before, a council had been held at Leighlin, in the south of the island, at the suggestion of Pope Honorius I., who had invited the Scots of Ireland to celebrate Easter according to the common practice of the Church. The fathers of this council, after much animated discussion, had decided that wise and humble men should be sent to Rome, as sons to their mother, to judge of the ceremonies there. These deputies declared, on their return, that they had seen the faithful from all parts of the world celebrating Easter on the same day at Rome. On their report the Romish cycle and rules relative to the Paschal calculations were adopted by all the south of Ireland. This decision had been chiefly brought about by the efforts of a disciple and spiritual descendant of Columba, a monk named Cummian, then abbot of one of the Columbian monasteries in Ireland. Abbot Cummian[1] had been obliged to defend himself against the attacks which his partiality for Roman usages brought upon him, by an apologetic letter, still preserved, where his erudition displays itself in an innumerable throng of texts and calculations. He sums up in these decisive words: "Can there be imagined a pretension more perverse and ridiculous than that which says: Rome is mistaken, Jerusalem is mistaken, Alexandria is mistaken, Antioch is mistaken, the whole world is mistaken; the Scots and the Britons alone make no mistake?"[2] But the example of the south of Ireland did not affect the north of the island, and still less the Picts and

[1] He must not be confounded with Cumin called the White (Cumineus albus), abbot of Iona from 657 to 669, author of the oldest biography of St. Columba.

[2] "Quid pravius sentire potest de ecclesia matre quam si dicamus: Roma errat, Hierosolyma errat, Alexandria errat, totus mundus errat; soli Scoti et Britones rectum sapiunt!"—CUMMIANUS HIBERNUS, *Epist. de Controversia Paschali, in* USSERII *Sylloge*, ii.

Scots of Caledonia. The arguments of Cummian could not convince the direct successor of Columba, the abbot of Iona.[1] He and all his community obstinately retained the Irish computation; and as it was precisely at this period that the missionaries sent from Ireland relighted in Northumbria the light of the faith, extinct since the death of King Edwin and the flight of Bishop Paulinus, it is easily apparent how it happened that the erroneous calculation of Easter, according to the Celts, took root everywhere together with the new doctrine. It is not even certain that Wilfrid was aware that anything favourable to his views had occurred in that part of Ireland which was farthest from Northumbria, for we do not find any mention of it in his acts or discourses.

As long as St. Aïdan, the first Celtic apostle of Northumbria, lived, the idea of finding fault with his method of celebrating the greatest feast of that religion which he taught and practised so well, had entered into no man's mind. Whether he himself was ignorant of the difference of ritual, or whether, knowing it, he did not choose to withdraw himself from the usages of his race and of the parent monastery of Iona, he was not the less the object of universal confidence and veneration.[2] Under his successor, Bishop Finan, the question had been raised, by one of the Lindisfarne monks, Irish by birth, who had travelled and studied in France and Italy. This monk, named Ronan,

[1] Segienus, descendant in the fourth degree from the grandfather of Columba, and fourth abbot of Iona, from 623 to 652.—Cf. LANIGAN, *Eccles. Hist. of Ireland*, ii. 389. DÖLLINGER, *Kirchengeschichte*, p. 221.

[2] The judgment of Bede on this aspect of the life of Aïdan deserves to be quoted at length, as much on account of its reserve as of its praises:—"Quod autem pascha non suo tempore observabat, vel canonicum ejus tempus ignorans, vel suæ gentis auctoritate ne agnitum sequeretur devictus, non adprobo, nec laudo. . . . Hæc dissonantia paschalis observantiæ vivente Ædano patienter ab omnibus tolerabatur qui patenter intellexerant, quia etsi pascha contra morem eorum qui ipsum miserant facere non potuit, opera tamen fidei, pietatis et dilectionis, juxta morem omnibus sanctis consuetum, diligenter exsequi curavit: unde ab omnibus etiam his qui de Pascha aliter sentiebant, merito diligebatur."—iii. 17, 25.

became involved in a violent quarrel with the Bishop of Northumbria upon the subject. He had led back a few to the Roman observance of Easter, and persuaded others to study the matter; but the bishop, harsh and passionate as Columba himself had sometimes been, far from being convinced, was only embittered by the remonstrances of Ronan, which served chiefly to make him a declared adversary of the Roman cause.[1]

When Finan died, leaving Bishop Colman—like himself, Irish by birth and a monk of Iona—as his successor at Lindisfarne, the dispute became at once open and general. Wilfrid had succeeded in sowing agitation and uncertainty in all minds; and the Northumbrians had come so far as to ask themselves whether the religion which had been taught to them, and which they practised, was indeed the religion of that Christ whose name it bore.[2]

The two Northumbrian kings mingled in the struggle on different sides. Oswy, the glorious vanquisher of Penda, the liberator of Northumbria, the conqueror and benefactor of Mercia, the Bretwalda or military and religious suzerain of the Anglo-Saxon confederacy, naturally exercised a much greater influence from that of his young son, whom he had associated with himself in the kingdom. And the mind of Oswy, who had been baptized and educated by Celtic monks, who spoke their language perfectly, and was probably desirous of conciliating the numerous Celtic populations who lived under his rule from the Irish Sea to the Firth of Forth, did not go beyond the instructions of his early masters.[3] Notwithstanding he had to contend within the circle of his family, not only with his son Alchfrid,

[1] "Quin potius, quod esset homo ferocis animi, acerbiorem castigando et apertum veritatis adversarium reddidit."—BEDE, iii. 25.

[2] "Unde movit hæc questio sensus et corda multorum, timentium ne forte, accepto Christianitatis vocabulo, in vacuum currerent aut cucurrissent."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

[3] "Illorum lingua optime imbutus, nihil melius quam quod illi docuissent æstimabat."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

excited in behalf of the Romish doctrine by his master and friend Wilfrid, but also with his queen, Eanfleda, who did not need the influence of Wilfrid to make her entirely devoted to the Roman cause, since, on returning from exile to marry Oswy, she had brought with her a Canterbury priest—Romanus by name, and Roman in heart—who guided her religious exercises. Under the direction of Romanus, the queen and all her court followed Roman customs. Two Easter feasts were thus celebrated every year in the same house; and as the Saxon kings had transferred to the chief festivals of the Christian year, and especially to the greatest of all, the meeting of their assemblies, and the occasion which those assemblies gave them of displaying all their pomp, it is easy to understand how painful it must have been for Oswy to sit, with his earls and thanes, at the great feast of Easter, at the end of a wearisome Lent, and to see the queen, with her maids of honour and her servants, persisting in fasting and penitence, it being with her still only Palm Sunday.[1]

This *discord*, as Bede says, with regard to Easter, was the capital point of the quarrel which divided the Anglo-Saxons into two bodies according as they had received the faith from Roman or Celtic missionaries. The differences remarked by Augustin in his struggles with the British clergy appear henceforward reduced to this one. The great reproach addressed to the Celtic clergy by the envoy of Pope Gregory, that they despised the work of converting the Saxons, is no longer in question. Our Celts of the North had succeeded only too well, according to Wilfrid, in converting and even in ruling two-thirds of Saxon England. Nor at this phase of the quarrel is there any further mention either of baptismal ceremonies, or of the

[1] "Observabat et regina Eanfleda cum suis juxta quod in Cantia fieri viderat. . . . Et cum rex Pascha dominicum solutis jejuniis faceret, tunc regina cum suis persistens adhuc in jejunio diem Palmarum celebrare."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

customs contrary to ecclesiastical celibacy,[1] or of any of the other points formerly contested. The difference of the two tonsures to which Wilfrid attached such great importance, and which must have struck from the first the eyes and attention of the Anglo-Saxon converts, is not even named in the long discussions of which we still possess a record.[2] All turn exclusively on the celebration of Easter.

Nothing could be more fanciful and more complicated than this Paschal calculation; nothing more difficult to understand, and especially to explain. Let us try, however, to draw forth some clear ideas from the depths of the endless dissertations of contemporary authors and even of more recent historians. Since the earliest days of Christianity a division had existed as to the proper date for the celebration of Easter. Some churches of Asia Minor followed the custom of the Jews by placing it on the fourteenth day of the first lunar month of the year. But all the churches of the West, of Palestine, and of Egypt, fixed upon the Sunday after the fourteenth day of the month nearest to the vernal equinox, so as not to keep the feast along with the Jews, and the general Council of Nice erected this custom into a law of the Church. Those who had not accepted this law, but persisted in celebrating the fourteenth day, were held as heretics and schismatics, under the name of *quartodecimans*. The imputation of complicity in this heresy made against the Celtic Church by the chiefs of the Roman clergy in a bull addressed in 640, during the vacancy of the Holy See, to the bishops and abbots of the

[1] It is now clearly shown that, in the Celtic Church, the deacons and priests never strayed from the Romish doctrine of celibacy. Their continence has been attacked, as that of the Briton clergy by Gildas, but no one has been able to prove that they regarded marriage as a remedy for this incontinence. There were depraved priests, there were also clerks not having received the higher orders who lived with their wives—but nothing more, and especially no excuse for setting up, either as a doctrine or as a regular habit, the marriage of priests.

[2] However, Bede, who has preserved all these discussions, says, in speaking of the tonsure: "Et de hoc questio non minima erat" (iii. 26).

north of Ireland, was most unjust.[1] The only mistake made by the Celts was that of neglecting to keep themselves informed of the difficulties which arose as to the manner of determining the commencement of the first lunar month, which ought to be the Paschal month. As has been already said in respect to the dispute between St. Augustin and the Britons of Cambria,[2] they had remained faithful to the custom which prevailed at Rome itself when Patrick and the other missionaries to the British Isles brought thence the light of the Gospel. At that period, in Rome and in all the West, the ancient Jewish cycle of eighty-four years was universally followed to fix this date. The Christians of Alexandria, however, better astronomers than those of Rome, and specially charged by the Council of Nice to inform the Pope of the date of Easter of each year, discovered in this ancient cycle some errors of calculation, and after two centuries of disputes they succeeded in making the Roman Church adopt a new Paschal cycle, that which is now universally received, and which limits the celebration of Easter to the interval between the 22nd of March and the 24th of April. The Celtic churches had no knowledge of this change, which dated from the year 525—that is to say, from a time when the invasions of the Saxons probably intercepted their habitual communications with Rome; they retained their old Jewish cycle of eighty-four years, and adhered obstinately to it. They celebrated Easter always on Sunday, but this Sunday was not always the one which had been appointed by the Romish Church after the new calculations. Thus it happened that King Oswy was eight days in advance of his wife, and complained of having to rejoice alone in the resurrection of Christ, while the queen was still commemorating the commencement of the passion in the services for Palm Sunday.

On this diversity, then, which was in appearance so slight and trifling, turned the great dispute between the

[1] BEDE, ii. 19.

[2] See above, p. 218.

Celtic and Roman monks, between those who had first began the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, and those who had so happily completed it. It is amazing to note the vehemence and the duration of a dispute so bitter on a subject so insignificant. Certainly there was something painful in being unable to persuade the new believers to celebrate the greatest festival of their religion on the same day; but, on the other hand, it is evident that all these Catholics must have been profoundly agreed as to the important questions of faith and practice, since they could attach so much weight to a difference of astronomical calculation.

Let us at the same time remark that throughout this controversy the Roman Church displayed an exemplary moderation, and always acted in conformity with the paternal instructions given by St. Gregory the Great to St. Augustin. She did not impose upon Wilfrid the mission he had taken upon himself. It was not at Rome, but at Lyons, that he received that tonsure which the Romans themselves do not seem to have taken much pains about. Rome never treated as schismatics or heretics those Celtic dissidents, the most illustrious of whom, Columbanus of Luxeuil and Aïdan of Lindisfarne, have always had a place in her martyrology. She never proceeded otherwise than by way of counsel and exhortation, without insisting on violent measures, and patiently awaiting the returning calm of excited spirits, giving to all an example of prudence, moderation, and charity.[1]

On the other hand, it is clearly evident that under the veil of a question purely ritual, was hidden one of political

[1] "Der Römischer Stuhl benahm sich im ganzen auch hier mit der ihm eigenen umsichtigen Weisheit und Liberalität." This is the testimony rendered by the illustrious Döllinger in his excellent account of this controversy, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, i. 2, 227. The learned historiographer of the Irish Church, Lanigan, professor of theology at Pavia, who wrote about 1828, quotes the excesses of the ultra-orthodox English converts, who would admit nothing to be good, or even tolerable, except what was practised at Rome, even in matters which the Romans themselves held of no importance (vol. ii. p. 414).

and personal influence. The precocious greatness of Wilfrid and his ambitious fervour might well awaken hostility among the clergy and nobles of Northumbria; his pretensions, which seemed so many audacious innovations, were of a kind to wound a people but recently converted, and instinctively inclined to attach great importance to the external forms of the new faith. But it was above all a struggle of race and influence. On one side the Celtic spirit, proud, independent, and passionate, of which the great abbot of Iona was the type, and of which his sons, the apostles of Northumbria, were the representatives; on the other, the spirit of Rome, the spirit of discipline and authority, imperfectly personified by its first envoys, Augustin and Paulinus, but endowed with a very different degree of vigour and missionary energy, since the moment when an Anglo-Saxon of the type of Wilfrid had constituted himself its champion. England was the stake of this game. All the future of that Christianity which had been so laboriously planted in the island, depended on its issue.

It is this which gives a truly historical interest to the famous conference of Whitby, convoked by King Oswy, for the purpose of regulating and terminating the dispute which troubled his kingdom and the neighbouring countries. He desired that the question should be publicly debated in his presence, and in that of the *Witenagemot*, or parliament, composed not only of the principal ecclesiastics and laymen of the country, but of all those who had a right to sit in the national councils of the Anglo-Saxons. It is to be remarked that here, for the first time in the history of these assemblies, a sort of division into two chambers like that which has become the fundamental principle of parliamentary institutions is visible. Bede states that the king consulted the nobles and the commoners, those who were seated and those who stood round, precisely like the lords and commons of our own days.[1]

[1] "Hæc dicente rege, elevatis in cœlum manibus, faverunt adsidentes

The place chosen for the assembly was on the sea-coast, and in the centre of the two Northumbrian kingdoms, at Streaneshalch or Whitby, in the double monastery of monks and nuns governed by the illustrious Hilda, a princess of the Northumbrian blood-royal, who was now fifty years of age, and thus joined to the known sanctity of her life [1] maturity of age and experience sufficient for the government of souls. Although baptized by Bishop Paulinus at the time of the first Romish mission to the court of her grand-uncle King Edwin, she was completely devoted to Celtic traditions, doubtless from attachment to the sainted Bishop Aïdan, from whom she had received the veil. Her whole community were of the same party which had been hitherto favoured by King Oswy, and was naturally represented by Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne, at that time the only prelate in the vast kingdom of Northumbria. He, with all his Celtic clergy, attended the council, as well as Cedd, a monk of Lindisfarne, who had become Bishop of the East Saxons, among whom he had re-established the episcopal see of London, after the expulsion of the Romish missionaries. Bishop Cedd, Anglo-Saxon by birth, but educated in Ireland before he became a monk in the Hiberno-Scottish monastery of Lindisfarne,[2] was to act as interpreter in the conference between the Celts on one side and those who spoke only Latin or English on the other, and he acquitted himself of these functions with a most watchful impartiality.

quique, sive adstantes, majores una cum mediocribus."—BEDE. "Beisitzende und umstehende, Adel und Gemeine."—LAPPENBERG, p. 165. This reminds one of the famous passage of Tacitus: "De minoribus rebus principes consultant; de majoribus omnes: ita tamen, ut ea quoque quorum penes plebem arbitrium est, apud principes pertractentur."—*De Mor. Germ.*

[1] "Præsenti Sancta-Moniali piissima Hilda." Such is the testimony borne to her by Eddi, the biographer of Wilfrid, whose adversary she always was.

[2] At least this is to be supposed from the comparison of different passages of Bede (iii. 23, 28; iv. 3), on the youth of the two brother bishops, Cedd and Ceadda.

The side opposed to the Celts had at its head the young king Alchfrid and the Bishop Agilbert; the latter, though educated in Ireland, not having hesitated to embrace the cause of those Roman customs which prevailed in France, his native country. Wilfrid was the soul of the discussion he had so warmly desired, and its special orator: he appeared in the arena in all the glow of youth and talent, but supported by two venerable representatives of Roman missions to England—the priest Romanus, who had accompanied the queen from Canterbury; and James, the aged, courageous, and modest deacon, sole relic and sole surviving witness of the first conversion of Northumbria under the father of Eanfleda, who had remained alone, after the flight of St. Paulinus, for nearly forty years, evangelising Northumbria and observing Easter according to the Roman custom, with all those whom he had preserved or restored to the faith.

All being assembled, perhaps in one of the halls of the great monastery of St. Hilda, but more likely, from the great numbers, in the open air on the green platform which then, as now, surmounted the abrupt cliffs of Whitby, and from whence the eye wanders far over those waves which bore the Saxons to the shores of Great Britain; King Oswy opened the proceedings by saying that as they all served the same God and hoped for the same heaven, it was advisable that they should follow the same rule of life and the same observance of the holy sacraments, and that it would therefore be well to examine which was the true tradition they ought to follow. He then commanded his bishop, Colman, to speak first, to explain his ritual, and to justify its origin. "I have," said the Bishop of Lindisfarne, "received the Paschal usage which I follow from my predecessors who placed me here as bishop; all our fathers have observed the same custom; these fathers and their predecessors, evidently inspired by the Holy Ghost, as was Columba of the Cell, followed the example of John the

apostle and evangelist, who was called the friend of our Lord. We keep Easter as he did, as did Polycarp and all his disciples of old. In reverence for our ancestors we dare not, and we will not, change."[1] Then the king gave leave to Agilbert to speak, that he might describe the reasons of his different observance; but the poor bishop, remembering that he had lost his vast diocese of Wessex through his imperfect knowledge of Anglo-Saxon,[2] begged that his disciple Wilfrid might be allowed to speak in his place. "We think precisely alike," said Agilbert, "but he can better express our thoughts in English, than I could through an interpreter."[3] Then Wilfrid began, "We keep Easter as we have seen it kept by all Christians at Rome, where the blessed apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, lived, taught, suffered, and are buried. We have seen the same rule observed in Italy and in Gaul, where we have studied; we know that it is so in Africa, in Asia, in Egypt, in Greece, and throughout Christendom, in spite of all difference of language and of country. It is only the Picts and Britons who, occupying the two most remote islands of the ocean, nay, but a part even of those islands, foolishly persist in contradicting all the rest of the world."[4]

Colman replied, "It is strange that you speak of our traditions as absurd, when we only follow the example of the great apostle who was thought worthy to lay his head upon the breast of our Saviour, and whom the whole world

[1] "Patres nostri et antecessores eorum manifeste Spiritu Sancto inspirati, ut erat Columcille. . . . Nec hoc audemus pro patribus nostris, nec volumus mutare."—EDDIUS, c. 10.

[2] See above, p. 353.

[3] "Loquatur, obsecro, vice mea discipulus meus Wilfridus presbyter; ille melius ipsa lingua Anglorum quam ego per interpretem."—BEDE, iii. 25.

[4] "Præter hos tantum et obstinationis eorum complices, Pictos dico et Britones, cum quibus de duabus ultimis oceani insulis, et his non totis, contra totum orbem stulto labore pugnant. . . . Mirum quare stultum appellare velitis laborem nostrum."—BEDE, *loc. cit.*

has judged to be so wise." The dialogue then continued in a less excited manner. In this discussion the bishop displayed the natural haughtiness of his race, and the abbot that persuasive eloquence already so dear to the Anglo-Saxons, who were charmed to hear their own barbarous language spoken perfectly by a man cultivated and formed by the learning of Italy and Gaul. As for the question itself, both had recourse to extremely poor arguments. Wilfrid quoted Scripture, where there is not a single word as to the Paschal cycle, and the decretals of the universal Church, of which only one relates to the matter, that of the Council of Nice, which contents itself with the decision that Easter should always be celebrated on Sunday, a particular which the Irish observed equally with the Romans. Instead of limiting himself to the statement that the rules established at Rome had been and ought to be adopted everywhere, he also affirmed that St. Peter had established the custom then followed at Rome, as if that custom had been always the same, and had not, in fact, been changed nearly a century before, to be brought into accordance with the best astronomical calculations. But Bishop Colman either knew nothing or understood nothing of this change, and was not able to cite it against his adversary. He perpetually recurred to the examples of St. John and the fathers of the Celtic Church, and with more vehemence still quoted Columba, whose life, so minutely described by the contemporaries of this very council of Whitby,[1] contains no trace of peculiar attachment to the Celtic Easter, but shows that he merely followed with simplicity the ancient usage transmitted by

[1] The first of these biographers, Cumin the White, was at that very time abbot of Iona, from whence Colman came; and the second Adamnan, then a monk in Ireland, was already forty years old in 664. The latter does not mention the Paschal difference except to relate the prophecy of Columba during his visit to Clonmacnoise, "De illa quæ post dies multos ob diversitatem paschalis festi orta est inter Scotiæ ecclesias discordia."—Lib. i. c. 3.

St. Patrick to the Irish monks. Nothing gives us reason to suppose that the great abbot of Iona, if once informed of the universal prevalence of the Roman custom, would have been opposed to it.

"Can we admit," said Bishop Colman, "that our most venerable father Columba, and his successors, men beloved of God, have acted contrary to the Divine Word? Many of them have given proof of their sanctity by miracles; and as for me, who believe in that sanctity, I choose to follow for ever their teaching and their example." Here Wilfrid had the better of the argument. "As to your father Columba and his disciples, with their miracles, I might answer that, at the day of judgment, many will say to our Lord, that they have done miracles in His name, and He will answer that He never knew them. But God keep me from speaking thus of your father! it is better, when one is ignorant, to believe good than evil. I do not therefore deny that they were servants of God, and beloved by Him: no doubt they loved Him in their rustic simplicity, with the most pious intentions. I do not think there was much harm in their observance of Easter, because no one had told them of more perfect rules. If a Catholic calculator had been presented to them, I believe they would have followed his counsel as they followed the commandments of God which they knew. But as for you, without doubt you sin, if, after having heard the decretals of the Apostolic See, and even of the universal Church, confirmed by Holy Scripture, you still despise them. Even admitting the sanctity of your fathers, how can you prefer, to the Church spread over the whole earth, this handful of saints in one corner of a remote island? Finally, for your Columba (and I would willingly say our Columba, so far as he was the servant of Christ), however holy or powerful by his virtues he may have been, can we place him before the chief of the apostles, to whom our Lord Himself said—'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church,

and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven'?"[1]

The Saxon king then addressed his bishop, "Is it true, Colman, that these words were said by our Lord to St. Peter?" "It is true, O king," was the answer. "Can you then," rejoined the king, "show me a similar authority given to your Columba?" "No," said the bishop. "You are then," continued the king, "both agreed that the keys of heaven were given to Peter by our Lord?" "Yes," answered the two adversaries together. "Then," said the king, "I say, like you, that he is the porter of heaven, and that I will not oppose him, but, on the contrary, obey him in all things, lest, when I reach the doors of the celestial kingdom, there be no one to open them for me if I am the adversary of him who carries the keys. In all my life I will neither do nor approve anything or any person that may be contrary to him."[2]

The whole assembly approved this conclusion of the king by vote, holding up their hands, both the nobles who were seated, and the freemen who stood round,[3] and all decided to adopt the Roman custom. The sitting ended without any discussion of the other contested points, which, no doubt,

[1] "Justius multo est de incognitis bonum credere, quam malum; unde et illos Dei famulos et Dei dilectos esse non nego, qui simplicitate rustica, sed intentione pia Deum dilexerunt . . . quos utique credo, si quis tunc ad eos catholicus calculator advenerat. . . . Etsi enim patres tui sancti fuerint, numquid universali quæ per orbem est ecclesiæ Christi, eorum est paucitas uno de angulo, extremæ insulæ præferenda. Etsi sanctus erat et potens virtutibus ille Columba vester, immo et noster si Christi erat."—BEDE, iii. 25. The dubious and slightly disdainful tone used by the young Wilfrid in speaking of the great Columba, of whose life he was evidently ignorant, is remarkable. However, this speech is only found in Bede, himself singularly hostile to Columba. Eddi, the contemporary and companion of Wilfrid, attributes to him much more humble language, of which he quotes little. Fleury, relating this scene, believes that he spoke against St. Columbanus of Luxeuil.

[2] "Ille est ostiarius et clavicularius, contra quem concluctationem controversiæ et judiciorum ejus in vita mea non facio, nec facientibus consentio."—EDDIUS, c. 10. Cf. BEDE, *loc. cit.*

[3] "Hæc dicente rege, elevatis in cœlum manibus, faverunt adsidentes quique, sive adstantes."—BEDE.

were regarded as settled by the first decision. Of the three bishops who had taken part in the deliberation, Agilbert, ex-Bishop of the Western Saxons, embarked for his own country, and Cedd, Bishop of the East Saxons, who had acted as interpreter to the two adverse parties, renounced the customs of Lindisfarne, in which he had been educated, and returned to his diocese of London to spread the Roman usages there.

But Colman, Bishop of the Northern Anglo-Saxons, refused to recognise the decision of the council. He could not resign himself to see his doctrine despised, and his spiritual ancestors depreciated; he feared, also, the anger of his countrymen, who would not have pardoned his defection.[1] Notwithstanding the affection and veneration shown for him by King Oswy, he determined to abandon his diocese. Accordingly, taking with him all the Lindisfarne monks of Scottish origin, who would neither give up the Celtic Easter nor shave their heads in Roman fashion, he left Northumbria for ever, and went to Iona to consult the fathers of the order, or family of St. Columba. He carried with him the bones of his predecessor St. Aïdan, the founder of Lindisfarne, and first Celtic evangelist of Northumbria, as if the ungrateful land had become unworthy to possess these relics of a betrayed saint, and witnesses of a despised apostleship. Undoubtedly this holy bishop, whose virtues, like those of his predecessors, draw, in this supreme hour, an eloquent and generous homage from the Venerable Bede, would have done better to have yielded and remained in his diocese conforming to the customs of Rome. But what heart is so cold as not to understand, to sympathise, and to journey with him along the Northumbrian coast and over the Scottish mountains, where, bearing homewards the bones of his father, the proud but vanquished spirit returned to his northern mists, and buried in the sacred isle of Iona his defeat and his unconquerable fidelity to the traditions of his race?

[1] "Propter timorem patriæ suæ."—EDDIUS, *loc. cit.* "Videns spretam suam doctrinam, sectamque esse despectam."—BEDE, iii. 26. Cf. iv. 4.

CHAPTER II

WILFRID, BISHOP OF YORK, AND THE GREEK MONK THEODORE, PRIMATE OF ENGLAND

Colman founds a half-Saxon, half-Celtic monastic colony in Ireland.—He is succeeded in Northumbria by the Anglo-Saxon Eata as prior of Lindisfarne, and by Tuda, an Irishman converted to the Romish ritual, as bishop. — Dedication of the great monastery of Peterborough, founded by the Christian descendants of Penda, the last pagan leader; at which Mercians and Northumbrians, Celts and Romanists, are present together; speech of King Wulphere.—Pestilence of 664; death of Tuda; Wilfrid elected Bishop of Northumbria.—Treating the Anglo-Saxon bishops as schismatics, he goes to be consecrated by the Bishop of Paris at Compiègne, and removes his see from Lindisfarne to York. —On his return he is shipwrecked on the coast of Sussex, and fights with the natives.—Celtic reaction against Wilfrid: King Oswy replaces him during his absence by an Irish abbot, Ceadda.—Sanctity and popularity of Ceadda.—The Northumbrians observe the decree of Whitby as to the celebration of Easter, but refuse to retain Wilfrid as bishop.—He retires to his monastery of Ripon.—He resides with the kings of Mercia and of Kent.—He assists the holy Queen Ermenilda in completing the conversion of the Mercians.—He introduces the Gregorian chant and the Benedictine rule into Northumbria.—The kings of Kent and Northumbria leave to the Pope the choice of the new metropolitan of Canterbury.—The Pope chooses a Greek monk Theodore, and associates with him Adrian, an African, and the Anglo-Saxon Benedict Biscop.—They are all three seized on their way by Ebroïn, but released.—The pontificate of St. Theodore, the first metropolitan recognised by all England.—He re-establishes Wilfrid in the see of York, who makes Ceadda Bishop of the Mercians.—Holy and peaceful death of Ceadda.—Theodore and Adrian visit all England.—Theodore's ecclesiastical legislation: his book of penance.—He consecrates the Celtic cathedral of Lindisfarne. — He creates the parochial system as it now exists, and holds the first Anglo-Saxon council at Hertford.—He fails in increasing the number of bishoprics, but introduces the Benedictine order into the monasteries.—Literary

development of the English monasteries due to Theodore and Adrian. —The Church of England is constituted, and the English nation becomes a lever in the hands of the Papacy.

It was not only the priests of Celtic origin, Irish or Scotch, who refused to sanction by their presence the introduction of Roman practices at Lindisfarne; Colman was also accompanied by thirty Anglo-Saxon monks, perfectly versed in the study and offices of monastic life, who preferred the Celtic observances to those of Rome. After a short sojourn at Iona, he led these emigrants to his native country, and established himself with them in a desert island on the west coast of Ireland called *Innisbowen*, or the Isle of the White Heifer, a name it still retains. But when confined in this islet, beaten by the waves of the great ocean, the Anglo-Saxons, whose devotion to Celtic tradition had been strong enough to sever them from their country, were unable to live amicably with the Irish, their former companions at Lindisfarne. They quarrelled about a purely material matter, which manifests even thus early the natural incompatibility of the two races who were destined afterwards upon Irish soil to fight more cruel battles. The Irish monks wandered all the summer through about their favourite spots, probably in many instances their native places; but on their return in winter they expected to share the harvest which their English brethren had painfully cultivated and gathered in.[1] Colman was obliged to separate them; leaving the Irish in their island, he installed the Anglo-Saxons in a monastery which, under the name of Mayo, flourished greatly, and

[1] Eo quod Scotti tempore æstatis quo fruges erant colligendæ, relicto monasterio, per nota sibi loca dispersi vagarentur; ut vero hieme succedente redirent, et his quæ Angli præparaverant, communiter uti desiderarent."—Bede, iv. 4. Is not this precisely the fable of the Grasshopper and the Ant? and is it not curious to discover, in a hidden corner of monkish history, a fresh proof of the radical difference and fatal incompatibility of the two races, Celtic and Saxon? This intractable Bishop Colman died in 674 or 676; he is reckoned among the saints of the Irish martyrology.

which a century later still continued to be occupied by English monks, fervent and laborious, who had, however, returned from Celtic usages to the orthodox rule, and probably to Benedictine discipline, which Wilfrid had established at the same time as he introduced conformity to the usages of Rome.

Colman, however, while withdrawing from Lindisfarne all his Celtic countrymen, and those of the Anglo-Saxons who sympathised with them, had no intention of handing over definitely to the enemy the sacred isle in which his predecessors had delighted to recognise a new Iona. Before setting out on his voluntary exile, he begged his friend King Oswy to allow the remaining monks at Lindisfarne to take for their superior that Eata whom Aïdan had chosen among his twelve first Northumbrian disciples, and who, out of love to Celtic traditions, had given up the monastery at Ripon, in which Wilfrid succeeded him, and had again become abbot of Melrose—that is to say, of the novitiate establishment of the Celtic monks in Northumbria. The king consented, and the confidant and friend of Colman became superior of Lindisfarne, with the title of prior, but the full authority of an abbot.

After this it became necessary to proceed immediately to replace Colman as Bishop of all Northumbria. His successor was one of his own countrymen, who resided in the diocese, and, indeed, during the pontificate of Colman, had been famed for his virtues and apostolical activity. This monk, named Tuda, had been educated in the monasteries of southern Ireland; he had already conformed to the Roman ritual in the questions of the celebration of Easter and the form of the tonsure—these customs having been, it is said, adopted thirty years before by the district of Ireland to which he belonged. It was only, therefore, by his Celtic origin that he was attached to the ancient traditions of the diocese. He died some months afterwards of a terrible pestilence, which in this year, 664, made cruel

ravages in the British Isles. He was the last of the Celtic bishops of Northumbria.[1]

Before his death, however, there occurred a great religious and national solemnity, at which he was present, and which was celebrated in this same critical year of 664, so decisive, under more than one aspect, for England. This solemnity seems to have united in sincere and unanimous enthusiasm all the principal personages of the most important states of the Heptarchy, and it exhibits, in a special degree, the increasing ascendancy of that Roman influence of which Wilfrid was henceforward the victorious champion. Its object was the dedication of a new monastery in Mercia, the kingdom which had been so long the stronghold of Saxon paganism and the seat of an obstinate resistance to the missionary spirit of Northumbria.

By one of those transformations so frequent among the Germanic races at the period of their entrance into the Christian life, all the descendants of the fierce Penda, the most obstinate and invincible of pagans, were destined to become intrepid champions of Christianity, or models of monastic life. Of his eight children who are known to us, three sons who reigned successively distinguished themselves by their religious zeal, the third becoming a monk after a reign of thirty years; while three daughters, two of whom are counted among the saints of the English calendar, ended their lives in the cloister. The eldest son, Peada, who was son-in-law of Oswy, brother-in-law and friend of Alchfrid, and the earliest Christian of Mercia, continued to reign over one part of the kingdom, even after the defeat and death of his father, who perished under the avenging sword of Oswy. The father-in-law and son-in-law, united more closely by their faith than the father and son had

[1] "Famulus Christi Tuda qui erat apud Scottos austrinos eruditus, atque ordinatus episcopus, habens juxta morem provinciæ illius coronam tonsuræ ecclesiasticæ et catholicam temporis paschalis regulam observans." —BEDE, iii. 26.

been by the ties of blood, determined to consecrate their alliance by founding a great monastery in honour of God and St. Peter, and chose for this purpose a retired situation in the east of Mercia.

Such was the origin of the abbey of Peterborough, the burgh or castle of St. Peter,[1] the most ancient of those famous houses destined to rise successively in the midst of the vast fens which formed a sort of natural frontier between the eastern and central Saxons, between Mercia and East Anglia.

Peada died a violent death when the work was but beginning.[2] But it was taken up, and continued by his young brother Wulphere, whom the Mercians, in revolt from Northumbrian domination, had chosen for their chief, who had been, like his elder brother, baptized by the second Celtic Bishop of Lindisfarne,[3] and who always showed an ardent zeal for the extension and consolidation of Christianity in his kingdom. His younger brothers and his two sisters, one of them the wife of the young King Alchfrid of Northumbria, the friend of Peada and Wilfrid, and all the *witan*—that is to say, the wise men and nobles, whether lay or ecclesiastical, of his public council[4]—encouraged him to the utmost in finishing the first great monastic foundation in their vast territory.

The abbot appointed from the beginning of the work was a monk named Sexwulf, descended from a great and noble family, devoted to the service of God, and much beloved by the Mercian Saxons. King Wulphere enjoined him to spare nothing to complete his brother's work magnificently, promising to be answerable for all the expense.

[1] It was at first called Medehamstede, which means *the house in the meadow*.

[2] By the treachery of his wife, daughter of Oswy, and sister of his friend Alchfrid, who, having married Peada's sister, was doubly his brother-in-law.—BEDE, iii. 24. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ad an. 665.

[3] *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. ii. February, p. 689.

[4] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:* Gibson's ed., Latin-Saxon text, p. 34; Giles's ed., English text, p. 321.

When the building was finished the king of Mercia invited, for the day of consecration, the king of Northumbria, who was his godfather, although he had become his political adversary, and whose dignity of Bretwalda entitled him to preside at the grand solemnities of the Saxon people; and with him the two kings of the neighbouring states of Essex and East Anglia, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of Rochester,[1] who were the first Anglo-Saxon monks raised to the episcopate; Wini, who had taken the place of Agilbert as Bishop of the Saxons of the West;[2] the two bishops of Mercia and Northumbria,[3] both educated in Celtic monasteries; and, last of all, Wilfrid, on whom all eyes had been turned by his late victories. Around these distinguished guests, both lay and ecclesiastical, were ranged all the earls and thanes, or great landed proprietors of the kingdom.[4] It was therefore really a great political assembly as well as a religious one. When the archbishop had ended the ceremony of dedication, and consecrated the monastery to St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Andrew, King Wulphere, placing himself in the midst of his family and his nobles, spoke thus:—"Thanks be to the most high and almighty God for the good deed which I do to-day in honour of Christ and St. Peter! All, as many as are here present, be witnesses and sureties of the donation which I make to St. Peter, to the abbot Sexwulf and his monks, of the land and water, the fens and brooks here mentioned. . . . It is a trifling gift; but I will that they hold and possess it so royally and freely that no impost may be levied upon it,

[1] Frithona and Ithamar.

[2] He was soon expelled from this usurped diocese; but thanks to the protection of Wulphere, he became Bishop of London, purchasing the see, according to Bede, who does not explain how the king of Mercia could dispose of the bishopric of the East Saxons.—*Eccles. Hist.*, iii. 7, 28. Lappenberg concludes that Wulphere became Bretwalda after the death of Oswy.

[3] Jaruman and Tuda.

[4] "Et ibi fuerunt omnes illius thani quotquot essent in suo regno. . . . Cum comitibus, cum ducibus, et cum thanis."—*Chron. Anglo-Sax.*, p. 35. Cf. HOOK, *Lives of the Archbishops*, t. i. p. 131.

and that the monastery may be subject to no other power on earth, except the Holy See of Rome, for it is hither that those of us who cannot go to Rome will come to seek and to visit St. Peter. I implore you, my brother, and you, my sisters, be witnesses to this for the good of your souls, and sign it with your hands. I implore those who shall succeed me, whether my sons, my brothers, or others, to maintain this donation, as they wish to obtain eternal life, and to escape eternal torment. Whoever shall take away from it, or add to it, may the keeper of the celestial gates take away from, or add to, his part in heaven." The four kings, the five bishops, the two brothers and two sisters of the king, the earls and lords, successively signed the act of donation with the sign of the cross, repeating this formula, "I confirm it by my mouth and by the cross of Christ." [1] The document which contained the donation having been drawn up in accordance with the royal speech, the four kings and two princesses signed it first, then the bishops, and after them Wilfrid, who describes himself on this occasion as a "priest, servant of the Churches, and bearer of the Gospel among the nations." [2]

Immediately following upon these events, came a terrible pestilence, which ravaged England, and chose its most illustrious victims among those prelates of whom we have been speaking. It carried off first Bishop Cedda, who had acted

[1] All these details are taken from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the most important and most authentic of all the historic monuments of the Anglo-Saxon epoch, after the History of Bede. Kemble, and after him several recent authors, see only modern interpolations in these passages relating to the abbey of Peterborough, but give no direct proof of this opinion. Kemble, however, describes the consent of the assembly, half lay and half clerical, to the king's donation. (*Codex Diplomat.*, n° 984.) M. Augustin Thierry has quoted the speech of Wulphere as authentic (*Hist. de la Conquête*, t. i. p. 88, edit. of 1846), and I do not see any reason for not following his example. The most complete version of the deed is in Dugdale's *Monasticon* (vol. i. p. 63). There will be found in the Appendix some notes on the present condition of this famous abbey.

[2] "Ego Wilfridus presbyter, famulus ecclesiarum, et bajulus evangelii Dei in gentes, affectavi."

as interpreter at Whitby, and his thirty friends, of whose touching death at Lastingham we have already heard;[1] and after him the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Northumbria, both of whom had signed the deed of dedication of the new monastery of St. Peter.[2] It became necessary, therefore, to provide for the see which the death of Tuda had left vacant, that of Northumbria, the largest and most important of all the English bishoprics. The Roman party believed itself so strong as to be able to disregard the tradition, not yet very venerable, which made that great see the right of the Celtic monks. They determined to go further back, to the recollections of the first mission sent from Rome, which, passing by Canterbury, was established at York by the Benedictine Paulinus. Besides this, the young king, Alchfrid, was impatient to see his friend Wilfrid master of spiritual authority in the kingdom which had been brought back by him to unity with Rome. He obtained the consent of his father, the Bretwalda Oswy, and both together reassembled the Witenagemot, to proceed to the election of a bishop, whose determination it should be to make Roman usages the law of his conduct. The Northumbrian thanes, consulted by the two kings, replied with one voice that no one in the whole country could be more worthy of the episcopate than Wilfrid, who was already priest and abbot. He himself was present at the assembly, and wished at first to decline the election. But he was commanded in the name of the Lord, and on the part of the kings and people of Northumbria, to submit his will to their unanimous choice.[3]

This was a great victory for the Roman observances.

[1] Page 357. [2] BEDE, iii. 25, 28, &c.

[3] "Reges concilium cum sapientibus suæ gentis . . . inierunt, quem eligerent in sedem vacantem, qui voluisset sedis apostolicæ doctrinam sibi facere et alios docere. . . . Neminem habemus meliorem et digniorem nostræ gentis quam Wilfridum . . . consenserunt reges et omnis populus huic electioni, et Wilfridum omnis conventus in nomine Domini accipere gradum episcopalem præcepit."—EDDIUS, c. 2.

It was never forgiven by the vanquished, and Wilfrid had to bear the penalty during all the remainder of his life. The Northumbrian dissenters submitted to the decision of Whitby, but they retained an implacable antipathy to the conqueror. The great abbess Hilda, the Celtic monks of Lindisfarne, all those who remained faithful to the sacred memory of St. Aïdan, and to that still more venerated, of Columba, appeared to have taken against Wilfrid the oath of Hannibal. Reduced to powerlessness on the Paschal question, in respect to which they could not struggle against Rome with the whole Church at her back, they regained the advantage when only the person of Wilfrid was concerned, who, dear as he was to the king's son, was perhaps for that very reason less liked by Oswy, who, though he adopted the Roman Easter, could not destroy all traces of attachment to the ideas and customs of his youth.

Wilfrid, meantime, chose this occasion to exhibit, yet more than at Whitby, the bigoted and exclusive side of his character. He would not be consecrated by any of the bishops of his own country, not even by the metropolitan of Canterbury. Although they were all in communion with the Holy See, and though many of them are still venerated as saints,[1] he took upon himself, on his own authority, to class them with schismatics. "My lord kings," he said, "I must first of all consider the best means of reaching the episcopate according to your election, without exposing myself to the reproaches of true Catholics. There are in this island many bishops whom it is not my business to accuse, but they have ordained Britons and Scots whom the Apostolic See has not received into communion, because it does not receive those that hold communion with schismatics.[2] I therefore humbly beseech

[1] FABER, p. 44.

[2] At least this seems to be the meaning of the somewhat obscure language his friend Eddi attributes to him: "O domini venerabiles reges. . . . Sunt hic in Britannia multi episcopi, quorum nullum meum est accusare: quamvis veraciter sciam quod haud quatuordecim anni sunt,

you to send me into Gaul, where there are many Catholic bishops, so that I may receive the episcopal character without opposition to the Holy See." He thus confounded together the whole Celtic clergy of Great Britain and Ireland as schismatics, though his apologists have not left us the least trace of any papal decision which authorised him in taking this attitude. However, the two kings made no objection, but, on the contrary, gave him a numerous train and enough money to present himself to the Franks with the pomp he loved, and which suited the bishop of a great kingdom. He thus crossed the sea and went to Compiègne to seek his friend Agilbert, formerly Bishop of the West Saxons, who had just been made Bishop of Paris. Agilbert received him with all honour as a confessor of the faith. Wilfrid was consecrated with the greatest solemnity, and with the assistance of twelve other bishops. He was carried through the church, in the midst of the crowd, on a golden throne, by the hands of bishops, who chanted hymns, and who were alone admitted to the honour of supporting his throne. He was instituted bishop, not of Lindisfarne, like his four predecessors, but of York, like Paulinus, the first bishop sent from Canterbury and from Rome, as if by this means to efface all trace of the Celtic mission in Northumbria.[1]

His stay in France was probably too much prolonged, and his return was not without disaster. While he was crossing the Channel, and the clergy who accompanied him, seated on deck, replaced the ordinary songs of the sailors by chanted psalms, a fearful storm arose, by which they were wrecked on the coast of Sussex—the smallest kingdom of the Hep-

ut Britones et Scoti ab illis sint ordinati, quos nec apostolica sedes in communionem recepit, neque eos qui schismaticis consentiunt."—C. 12.

[1] "Tale consilium bene regibus complacuit, præparantes ei navem et auxilia hominum et multitudinem pecuniæ. . . . In sella aurea sedentem more eorum sursum elevarunt, portantes in manibus soli episcopi intra oratoria, nullo alio attingente. . . . Post spatium temporis ad sedem episcopalem Ebracæ civitatis hunc emiserunt."—EDDIUS, *loc. cit.* Cf. BEDE, iii. 28; FRIDEGODUS, *Vita Rhythmica*, c. 11.

tarchy, inhabited, as its name indicates, by the Southern Saxons. The ebbing tide having left the ship aground, the people in the neighbourhood made a rush to avail themselves of that right to wreck and derelict always so dear to maritime populations, and which has been too long maintained even among the most Catholic, as in our own Bretagne. As the Southern Saxons were still pagans, we can scarcely admit, with one of Wilfrid's biographers, that they were excited against him by the malice of Celtic Christianity; but they did not the less manifest their intention of taking possession of the vessel, and giving the shipwrecked strangers their choice between death and slavery. Wilfrid tried to pacify them, offering all he possessed for the liberty of himself and his followers. But the pagans were excited by one of their priests, who, standing on the cliffs, cursed, like Balaam, the people of God, and looked as if he meant to destroy them by sorcery. One of Wilfrid's followers, armed, like David, with a sling, flung a stone at the heathen pontiff, whose skull it shattered; and his corpse fell upon the sands. At this sight the rage of the savages redoubled, and they prepared to take the vessel by storm. Wilfrid's Northumbrians, one hundred and twenty in number, resolved to defend themselves. They swore, according to Saxon custom, not to abandon each other, and to think of no alternative save a glorious death or victory. Wilfrid and his priests, kneeling on the deck, prayed while the others fought. Three times the ferocious wreckers mounted to the assault, and three times they were repulsed. They were preparing for a fourth attack, under the command of their king, who had been attracted by the hope of booty, when the tide suddenly turned, lifted the stranded vessel, and saved the travellers from their enemies. They landed peaceably at Sandwich, on the same Kentish coast where Augustin and his companions had for the first time trodden the coast of England.[1]

[1] "Canentibus clericis et psallentibus laudem Dei pro celeusmate in choro. . . . Mare navem et homines relinquens . . . littora detergens, in abyssi matricem recessit. . . . Stans princeps sacerdotum idololatriæ coram paganis in tumulo excelso, sicut Balaam . . . ut suis magicis artibus manus

A painful surprise awaited them. During the prolonged absence of Wilfrid the mind of Oswy had changed. The victory of Whitby, like all other victories, was less complete than it at first seemed to be. The Celtic party, apparently destroyed by the unanimous vote of the assembly, had now revived, and regained its credit with the Bretwalda. The return of Oswy to his former predilections for the Celtic Church, in which he had been baptized and brought up, may probably be ascribed to the influence of the holy abbess Hilda of Whitby, princess of the Northumbrian blood-royal, to whom the king had confided his daughter when consecrating her to God as the price of his victory over the Mercians and the completed liberation of his country.[1] As long as she lived Hilda remained faithful to the Celtic traditions, and her opposition to Wilfrid never relaxed.[2] It has also been supposed that Oswy had begun to be jealous of his son Alchfrid, and of the influence procured for him with the Roman party by his close alliance with Wilfrid, although it was Oswy himself who had associated his son with him in the royalty, and although his position as Bretwalda or suzerain of the Anglo-Saxon Confederation might have reassured him on that score.[3] But the confidant and biographer of Wilfrid affirms that the Celts (whom he most unjustly styles quartodecimans), with the aid of the devil, persuaded the king to take advantage of the absence of Wilfrid to appoint one of their party Bishop of York in his place.[4]

eorum alligare nitebatur . . . retrorsum cadavere cadente sicut Goliathus in arenosis locis. . . . Inito pactu, ut nullus ab alio in fugam terga verteret, sed aut mortem cum laude, aut vitam cum triumpho habere mererentur." —EDDIUS, c. 13.

[1] See above, p. 366.

[2] VARIN, account already quoted. WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY, *loc. cit.*

[3] FABER, p. 46. A trace of this rivalry between father and son is clearly shown in this passage of Bede :—"Rex Alchfrid misit Wilfridum ad regem Galliarum, qui eum consecrari faceret episcopum. . . . Imitatus industriam filii rex Osviu misit Cantiam, virum sanctum."—iii. 28.

[4] "Oswiu rex, male suadente invidia, hostis antiqui instinctu, alium præarripere inordinate sedem suam edoctus, consensit ab his qui quartadecimanam partem contra apostolicæ sedis regulam sibi elegerunt."—EIDDUS, c. 14.

It is unanimously allowed that the man whom Oswy substituted for Wilfrid was a saint. His name was Ceadda,[1] a monk of Anglo-Saxon birth, but who had been a disciple of St. Aïdan. He was a brother of Bishop Cedd or Cedda, who had acted as interpreter at Whitby, and whose death, followed by that of his thirty friends, we have already mentioned. Ceadda had succeeded his brother as abbot of Lastingham, the monastery which was, after Lindisfarne, the principal seat of the Celtic spirit in Northumbria. It was Oswy's desire, however, that the new bishop should be consecrated, not by the prelates of the Celtic ritual, but at Canterbury by the Saxon metropolitan,[2] who had always preserved a good understanding with the people of the north. But when Ceadda arrived at Canterbury he found that the terrible pestilence of 664 had carried off the archbishop, whose successor was not yet appointed. He then went to the land of the Eastern Saxons to obtain consecration from Wini, of whom we have heard at Whitby and Peterborough, but who also appears to have been moved by a reactionary impulse against the vote of the Council, since he called to his aid, in the consecration of Ceadda, two British bishops who had remained faithful to the Paschal usage of the Celts.[3] On his return to Northumbria, Ceadda peaceably took possession of his diocese, and displayed there the virtues which have for so long made his name popular among the English. Well versed in Holy Scripture, he drew from it rules of conduct which he never disregarded. His humility, his sincerity, the purity of his life, his love for study, excited the admiration of the Northumbrian people, to whose evangelisation he devoted himself, visiting the cities, villages, and castles, nay,

[1] He is venerated in England under the name of St. Chad. "Religiosissimum admirabilem doctorem, de insula Hibernia venientem."—EDDIUS, c. 14. BEDE, iii. 21, 23; iv. 2.

[2] Frithona, also called Deusdedit.

[3] "Absumptis in societatem ordinationis duobus de Britonum gente episcopis, qui dominicum paschæ diem . . . secus morem canonicum, a quarta decima usque ad vigesimam lunam celebrant."—BEDE, iii. 28.

even the most retired hamlets, not on horseback, according to the favourite custom of the Saxons, but on foot, like the apostles, and like his master and predecessor St. Aïdan.[1]

It does not appear, however, that Ceadda or any other of the Celtic adversaries of Wilfrid attempted to reverse the decision of the Council of Whitby, or to maintain or re-establish either the Celtic observance of Easter or the tonsure from ear to ear. It is probable that the opposition which arose against Wilfrid, continually increasing in violence, was directed less against Roman doctrines or practices than against himself personally. His precocious influence, and still more his violent proceedings against the Irish and their disciples, roused the popular dislike ; for it is proved that, wherever he had the power, he allowed the Celts only the choice of giving up their own customs or returning to their native country.[2]

Thus dispossessed of his see, Wilfrid regained all his influence by the moderation and dignity of his conduct. He was only thirty years of age. His youth might have excused some irritation, some warmth easy to be understood in the presence of so manifest an injustice. But far from yielding to this, he displayed the prudence and mature mind of a statesman, together with the humility and charity of a saint. He, so rigid an observer of the canon law, so scrupulous with regard to liturgical irregularities, had here to oppose an inexcusable abuse of power, a direct violation of the laws of the Church—he had to vindicate an evident right, solemnly conferred by the Northumbrian king and nation, and solemnly consecrated by the Church. And yet he pre-

[1] "Oppida, rura, casas, vicos, castella propter evangelizandum, non equitando . . . peragrare."—BEDE, iii. 28.

[2] "Ipse perplura catholicæ observationis moderamina ecclesiis Anglorum sua doctrina contulit. Unde factum est, ut, crescente per dies institutione catholica, Scotti omnes qui inter Anglos morabantur aut his manus darent, aut suam redirent ad patriam."—BEDE, iii. 28. "Hic primus verum pascha, ejectis Scottis, in Northumbria docuit."—THOM. DE ELMHAM, *Hist. Monast. S. Augustini*, p. 198.

ferred to be silent, to withdraw himself, and to trust to the justice of God and of the future. Thus the saint begins to be visible in his character; and it must not be forgotten, as an additional claim upon our interest, that the pious usurper of the see was himself already accounted a saint, and placed by public veneration in the high rank which he has for nine hundred years maintained in the regard of English Catholics.

Wilfrid, whose episcopal character no one could despise, but who had no longer a diocese, retired calmly, and even joyfully, to the monastery of Ripon, which he held by the generosity of the young King Alchfrid, and there lived in study and seclusion.[1] It may be supposed that his friend Alchfrid went thither to console him—if, indeed, he were living at the time of Wilfrid's return; for from that moment he disappears from history, though there is no record of his death. But Wilfrid was not long permitted to remain in his monastery. Wulphere, king of Mercia, the founder of Peterborough, invited him to his kingdom, where at that time there was no bishop.[2]

Although this kingdom had been converted and governed by Celtic monks, Wulphere was naturally drawn to favour the champion of the Roman ritual, by his marriage with Ermenilda, daughter of the king of Kent, and, consequently, sprung from that race which first received the teachings of Rome from the lips of St. Augustin. She was niece of Eanfleda, queen of Northumbria, who had been the first protectress of Wilfrid, and who had carried back from her exile and education at Canterbury so faithful an attachment to the Roman customs. King Wulphere, Queen Ermenilda, and the Abbot Wilfrid, therefore laboured together to extend and consolidate the Christian faith, in that vast kingdom of

[1] "Placido vultu et hilari pectore cœnobium suum in Ripon repetiit, ibique cum magna mentis stabilitate."—RICARD. HAGULSTAD., *Hist. Eccles. Hagust.*, c. 6.

[2] Bishop Jaruman had been sent by Wulphere to lead back to the true faith the Eastern Saxons, who, since the great pestilence of 664, had fallen into idolatry. See above, p. 358.

Mercia, which already began to rival Northumbria in importance.

Thanks to the great territorial donations made to him by the king, Wilfrid was able to found several monasteries, in one of which he was destined to end his life. He thus lent powerful aid in achieving the happy results which were chiefly due to Queen Ermenilda. This gentle and noble woman, who, like so many other princesses of the race of Hengist, ended her days in the cloister, and is inscribed in the list of saints, had been chosen by God to complete the transformation into Christians of those terrible Mercians, who, more than all the other Anglo-Saxons, had remained faithful to their national paganism, and had been so long the terror of the new-born Christianity of England. She succeeded as much by her bounties and good example, as by her energetic perseverance. The unwearied activity of her self-devotion was only equalled by her angelic sweetness. She never ceased her exertions until, after a reign of seventeen years with Wulphere, idolatry had completely disappeared from Mercia. Then, on the death of her husband, she entered the monastery, where her mother awaited her, and which had been founded by her aunt.[1]

In order to understand clearly the aspect of these earliest ages of the political and religious history of England, it is needful to remember the ties of blood which united all the kings and princesses of different dynasties who governed the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, and claimed their descent from Odin. This relationship frequently serves to guide us through the maze of incidents which favoured or retarded the preaching of the Gospel. Thus the gentle and noble Ermenilda was the sister of Egbert, king of Kent, who,

[1] "Sua dulcedine, blandifluis hortamentis, moribus ac beneficiis indomita mulcens pectora, ad suave Christi jugum rudes populos et indoctos excitabat. . . . Nec requievit invicta, donec idola et ritus dæmoniacos extirparet. . . ."—*Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. ii. Feb., p. 691. The history of the monastery of Ely, founded by St. Etheldreda, and of which Ermenilda succeeded her mother, Sexburga, as abbess, will be found further on.

faithful, like her, to the traditions of his family, always showed himself full of zeal for religion such as Augustin had preached it to his ancestor Ethelbert, and full of affection for Wilfrid. Accordingly, after the death of Augustin's fifth successor, the metropolitan see having remained vacant for some years, Egbert invited the abbot of Ripon to preside over the spiritual government of his kingdom, and to provide for the ordinations.

Wilfrid exercised this provisional authority for three years; dividing his time between his Northumbrian monastery and the diocese of Canterbury, where he made many friends, whose aid he secured for the benefit of his abbey of Ripon. One of his first acts was to bring to Ripon two monks of the monastery of St. Augustin, good musicians, who introduced among the Anglo-Saxons the Gregorian Chant, always used at Canterbury; and it is to one of these, named Hedd, or Eddi, that we owe the extremely valuable and curious biography of his bishop. With these singers Wilfrid brought also masons, or rather architects, *cæmentarii*, and other artists or workmen, all, no doubt, monks of the same monastery, whose talents he proposed to employ in the great building of which he already dreamed. Finally he brought from the first sanctuary created by the Benedictines in England, a gift yet more precious and more fruitful than music or architecture, the rule of St. Benedict, which no one had hitherto attempted to introduce into the Northumbrian monasteries.[1] Wilfrid constituted himself its ardent and zealous missionary, advancing its adoption side by side with that of the Roman tonsure, the exact observance of Easter, and the harmonious and alternate chanting of the liturgy. He succeeded thoroughly; for it is to him and to

[1] "Cum cantatoribus Ædde et Æona et cæmentariis omnisque pæne artis ministerio in regionem suam revertens cum regula Benedicti, instituta ecclesiarum bene melioravit."—EDDIUS, c. 14. "Nonne ego curavi . . . quomodo vitam monachorum secundum regulam S. Benedicti patris quam nullus ibi prius invexit, constituerem?"—*Ibid.*, c. 45. Cf. MABILLON, *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, t. v. p. 633, puis *Annales Benedictini*, lib. xv. n. 64.

him alone that we must attribute the gradual but rapid substitution of the Benedictine rule for Celtic traditions in the great and numerous communities which the sons of St. Columba had created in the north of England. It has been already made apparent in the life of St. Columba, that there was no fundamental difference between monastic life as regulated by the great legislator of Monte Cassino, and that practised at Iona and in the other communities of Ireland and Great Britain. The only difference that can be indicated as distinctly characteristic of monastic life among the Celts, is a certain increased austerity in fasts and other mortifications, and a more decided application to the copying of manuscripts.[1] But in the opinion of Wilfrid, as in the general interest of the Church, it was of great consequence that the powerful regular army of Saxon Christianity should march under the same flag, and answer to the same watchword. The watchword and the flag had been brought from Rome by the Benedictine missionaries of Mont-Cœlius, and confided to the two great monastic foundations of Canterbury, from whence Wilfrid brought them to make of them the supreme, and henceforward ineffaceable, characteristics of English ecclesiastical organisation.

However, the aspect of affairs was about to undergo another change. It was needful to find a successor for Archbishop Deusdedit. For this purpose, the king of Northumbria, Oswy, made use of the superior authority in ecclesiastical affairs which seems to have been accorded to the Bretwalda; he showed, at the same time, that though the Celtic party, by appealing to the recollections of his youth, had been able to persuade him to make Wilfrid the victim of an unjust exclusion, he remained, nevertheless, sincerely submissive to the primacy of the Holy See, which

[1] As to the election of abbots, which was one of the most essential bases of the Benedictine rule, it appears that Wilfrid himself departed from it without hesitation by naming to his monks the successor they were to give him.—EDDIUS, c. 61.

he had so solemnly recognised at Whitby. After consulting with the young King Egbert of Kent and the chiefs of the Anglo-Saxon clergy, he appointed a monk of Canterbury, named Wighard, universally known to be worthy of the episcopate, a Saxon by birth, but trained in the school of the first missionaries sent from Rome by St. Gregory,[1] and thus uniting all the conditions necessary to satisfy at once the exigencies of the national spirit and those of the most severe orthodoxy. Then, still acting in conjunction with the king of Kent, he did what had never before been done by an English king, nor, indeed, so far as I know, by the king of any newly converted nation; he sent the archbishop-elect to Rome to be consecrated by the Pope, so that he might be able to ordain perfectly orthodox bishops in all the churches of England.

Wighard had but just arrived at Rome, when he died there with nearly all his attendants. The two kings then resolved to leave to the Pope the choice of the new metropolitan of England.

But great as was Oswy's zeal and humility in yielding to Roman supremacy, the want of eagerness displayed by Vitalien, who was then Pope, in using the power thus given up to him, was equally remarkable. He replied to Oswy that he had not yet been able to find a person suited for so distant a mission, but promised to make further attempts to find one, and in the meantime congratulated the king on his faith, exhorting him to continue to conform, whether with regard to Easter, or to any other question, to the traditions of the Apostles Peter and Paul, whom God had given to the world as two great lights, to enlighten every day the hearts of the faithful by their doctrine; and exhorted him to com-

[1] "Intellexerat enim veraciter quamvis educatus a Scottis, quia Romana esset catholica et apostolica ecclesia. . . . Cum electione et consensu sanctæ ecclesiæ gentis Anglorum. . . . Virum nomine Vigherdum qui a Romanis B. Gregorii papæ discipulis in Cantia fuerat omni ecclesiastica institutione sufficienter edoctus."—BEDE, *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 29; *Hist. Abbatum in Wiramutha et Girvum*, n. 3.

plete the work of the conversion and union of the whole island in the same apostolic faith. He sent him, at the same time, some relics of different martyrs, and a cross containing a portion of the chains of St. Peter for Queen Eanfleda, the friend of Wilfrid. "Your wife," said the Pope, "is our spiritual daughter; her virtues and good works are our joy, and that of all the Roman Church, and they bloom before God like the perfumed flowers of spring."[1]

After a new and long search the Pope fixed his choice on Adrian, an African by birth, and abbot of a monastery near Naples, equally versed in ecclesiastical and monastic discipline, and in the knowledge of Greek and Latin. Adrian made no objection either to the distance or to his ignorance of the Anglo-Saxon language, but he declared himself unworthy of the episcopate, and pointed out to the Pope a monk whose age and qualifications accorded better with this difficult mission. This was a monk named Andrew, attached to a nunnery in Italy, and who was judged worthy to be chosen; but his bodily infirmities obliged him to give up the appointment. Then Adrian, again urged by the Pope, proposed to him another of his friends, a Greek monk named Theodore, born, like St. Paul, at Tarsus, but then living at Rome, of good life and morals, of a knowledge so profound and various, that he was surnamed the Philosopher,[2] and already of a venerable age, being sixty-six years old. This proposition was accepted by the Pope, but with the condition that the Abbot Adrian should accompany his friend to England, to watch over his proceedings, that nothing contrary to the orthodox faith

[1] "Hominem docibilem et in omnibus ornatum antistitem, secundum vestrorum scriptorum tenorem, minime valebimus nunc reperire pro longinquitate itineris. . . . Festinet vestra celsitudo, ut optamus totam suam insulam Deo Christo dicare. . . . De cujus pio studio cognoscentes, tantam cuncta sedes apostolica una nobiscum lætatur, quantum ejus pia opera coram Deo fragrant et vernant."

[2] "Sæculari simul et ecclesiastica philosophia præditum virum, et hoc in utraque lingua, græca scilicet et latina."—BEDE, *Hist. Abbatum*, c. 3. Cf. *Hist. Ecclesiast*, iv. 1.

might be introduced into the Church, as was too often done by the Greeks. This precaution was justified by the cruel and sanguinary dissensions which then disturbed the Eastern Church, occasioned by the heresy of the Monotheists, and the constant interference of the Byzantine emperors in questions of faith. The matter being thus arranged, Theodore, who had his head entirely shaved, after the custom of the Eastern monks, was obliged to defer his journey for four months, that his hair might grow, before he could receive the crown-shaped tonsure of the West. As soon as his hair had been properly shaved, he was consecrated by the Pope, and started with the Abbot Adrian for England.

But to the Asiatic and the African, so strangely chosen to rule the Anglo-Saxon Church, and who so well fulfilled their task, the Pope wisely determined to add a third, whose help, especially at the commencement of their mission, would be indispensable to them. This was the young Northumbrian noble, Benedict Biscop, whom we have seen start from England to make his pilgrimage to Rome with Wilfrid, parting from him at Lyons. After his first journey, Benedict returned to England, and gave his countrymen an ecstatic account of all that he had seen at Rome, every recollection of which he cherished. These recollections drew him a second time to Rome, where, after new studies and new enjoyments, he received the tonsure, and embraced a monastic life at the great sanctuary of Lerins, where Abbot Aygulphe had just introduced the Benedictine rule.[1] After remaining two years in this still venerated isle, he was unable to resist his desire of returning to Rome out of devotion to St. Peter. He arrived there for the third time in a trading-vessel, and remained until Pope Vitalien commanded him to give up this pilgrimage in order to accomplish a much more meritorious one by returning to his own

[1] ALLIEZ, *Histoire du Monastère de Lérins*, 1860, vol. i. p. 371. I am glad to mention, in passing, this monograph as one of the best works of our time on monastic history.

country as guide and interpreter to the new archbishop.[1] Benedict obeyed; and seventy years after the mission of St. Augustin, the three envoys started for England to take possession of it, as it were, a second time, in the name of the Church of Rome.

But their journey was not without hindrance; it took them more than a year to go from Rome to Canterbury. Instead of finding in France, as Augustin had done, the generous assistance of a queen like Brunehilde, the new missionaries became the prey of the tyrant Ebroïn, mayor of the palace, the first of those great statesmen, too numerous in our history, whom posterity has so meanly admired or absolved, and who, to the misfortune of our country, sought the triumph of their personal greatness only in the universal abasement and servitude of others. The presence of these three personages, a Greek, an African, and an Anglo-Saxon, all bearing recommendations from the Pope, appeared suspicious to the all-powerful minister. The Byzantine emperor, Constantine II., at that time still sovereign of Rome, which he had lately visited and pillaged, but where he talked of re-establishing the seat of empire, had excited the anxiety of Ebroïn, who imagined that the Papal messengers might be charged with the management of some plot between the Emperor and the Anglo-Saxon kings against the Frankish kingdom of Neustria and Burgundy, of which he regarded himself as chief. The Abbot Adrian appeared to him the most dangerous, and he therefore detained him a prisoner for two years after the release of the others. Meanwhile, thanks to the direct intervention of King Egbert, the Archbishop Theo-

[1] "Ad patriam reversus studiosius ea quæ videt ecclesiasticæ vitæ instituta diligere et quibus potuit prædicare non desiit. . . . Non pauca scientiæ salutaris quemadmodum et prius hausta dulcedine. . . . Adveniente nave mercatorio, desiderio satisfecit. . . . Et quia Benedictum sapientem, industrium, religiosum ac nobilem virum fore conspexit (papa) huic . . . cum comitibus suis commendavit episcopum . . . cui pariter interpres existere posset et ductor."—*Hist. Abbatum*, c. 2, 3.

dore was enabled to reach England, and solemnly take possession of his see. His first act was to confide to his pious companion, Benedict Biscop, the government of that great abbey near Canterbury which contained the sepulchres of the archbishops and kings, and which had been dedicated by St. Augustin to St. Peter, though it is now only known by the name of the Apostle of England. Benedict remained there as superior until the arrival of Adrian, to whom it was transferred by the new archbishop, according to the Pope's commands that the African abbot and the monks who accompanied him should be established in his diocese.[1]

The arrival of St. Theodore marks a new era in the history of the Anglo-Saxons.[2]

There must have been, indeed, a stern courage and a holy ambition in this grand old man to induce him, at sixty-seven years of age, to undertake so laborious a task as that of the spiritual government of England. The history of the Church presents few spectacles more imposing and more comforting than that of this Greek of Asia Minor, a countryman of St. Paul, a mitred philosopher[3] and almost septuagenarian monk, journeying from the shores of the East to train a young nation of the West—disciplining, calming, and guiding all those discordant elements, the different races, rival dynasties, and new-born forces, whose union was destined to constitute one of the greatest nations of the earth.

Thanks to the assistance of the powerful king of Northumbria, the new Archbishop of Canterbury found himself invested, for the first time, with authority recognised by all the Anglo-Saxons. This supremacy, which the intelligent desire of the Bretwalda Oswy for union with Rome enabled him to exercise, was solemnly recognised by Pope Vitalien,

[1] BEDE, *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 1; *Hist. Abbat.*, c. 3.

[2] LINGARD, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 77.

[3] "Cofamulum et cœpiscopum nostrum, magnæ insulæ Brittaniæ archiepiscopum et philosophum."—*Epist.* AGATHONIS *Papæ ad Imp.*, ap. BARONIUM, an. 680.

who renewed in his favour all the prerogatives conferred by Gregory the Great on Augustin and the see of Canterbury, omitting all mention of the second see which Gregory had wished to establish at York.[1] This supreme authority over all the Churches of Great Britain, whatever their antiquity or origin, had been, in the hands of Augustin and his successors, only a title and a right; in those of the venerable Greek monk, it now became, for the first time, a powerful and incontestable reality.

The first use which he made of this supremacy was to repair the injustice of which Wilfrid had been the victim. Oswy seems to have made no opposition; he yielded to the apostolic authority, whose decrees Theodore made known to him.[2] He thus crowned his reign by an act of reparation and of repentance, in allowing the man whom he had unjustly expelled[3] to be re-established in the episcopal see of the capital of his kingdom. The humble and pious Ceadda, who, by some strange forgetfulness of duty, had consented to replace Wilfrid, made no opposition to the application of canon law, which deprived him of his usurped see. He said to the Archbishop, "If you are certain that my episcopate is not legitimate, I will abdicate it voluntarily; I have never thought myself worthy of it, and only accepted

[1] "Is primus erat in archiepiscopis, cui omnis Anglorum ecclesia manus dare consentiret."—BEDE, iv. 2. Cf. GUILL. MALMESB., *De Gest. Pontif. Angl.*, i. 1. "Nobis visum est te exhortari et in præsente commendare tuæ sagacissimæ sanctitati omnes ecclesias in insulas Britanniæ positas. Omnia ergo quæ a S. Gregorio prædecessore nostro Augustino sincello suo statuta sunt atque firmata vel etiam per sacrum usum pallii concessum, nos tibi in ævum concessimus."—*Diplomo of Pope Vitalien*, in *Act. SS. Bolland*, t. vi. Septembris, p. 59.

[2] "Veniens ad regem . . . statuta apostolicæ sedis, unde emissus venerat, secum deportans."—EDDIUS, c. 15.

[3] It must be observed that Wilfrid was only bishop, never archbishop, of York. The metropolitan dignity attached by St. Gregory to that see disappeared after the flight of Paulinus, and was restored only in 735 to Egbert, known by the letter addressed to him by the Venerable Bede, and by many relics of ecclesiastical legislation published in the *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England.*

it in obedience." Upon which, as Wilfrid, when dispossessed by him, retired to the monastery of Ripon, he himself returned to that of Lastingham, founded by his brother, from whence he had been taken to be made bishop. He lived for some time peacefully in this retreat. But the generous Wilfrid, appreciating the virtues of the holy intruder, whose diocese he had continued to inhabit, was determined to bring them back again to the light. The bishopric of the kingdom of Mercia having become vacant, he persuaded his faithful friend Wulphere to summon Ceadda thither, and gave up to him for his residence a place called Lichfield, previously bestowed by the king on Wilfrid, that he might establish an episcopal see there, either for himself or for another.[1] Theodore and Ceadda both consented to this plan. The only condition made by the archbishop was that the bishop should be consecrated anew, with the assistance of Wilfrid, on account of the irregularity caused by the presence of the two Britons who had assisted at his first consecration.[2] In other respects, Theodore never ceased to do him all the honour which his holy life deserved; and as, from love to his work, and according to the custom of the first Northumbrian bishops of Celtic race, Ceadda persisted in traversing on foot the immense extent of his new diocese, the primate commanded him to use a horse, and himself held the stirrup to oblige

[1] "Si me nosti episcopatum non rite suscepisse, libenter ab hoc officio discedo: quippe qui neque me unquam hoc esse dignum arbitrabar."—BEDE, iv. 2. "Ille servus Dei verus et mitissimus . . . Sciebat (Wilfridus) sub Wulfario rege fidelissimo amico suo locum donatum sibi."—EDDIUS, c. 15. Lichfield, erected into a metropolis some time during the eighth century, and still a bishopric, derived its name from the number of bodies of martyrs killed in the reign of Diocletian which have been discovered there—*Leich* or *Lich-field*.

[2] This is the first application of a canon which afterwards became law: "Qui ordinati sunt Scotorum vel Britonnum episcopi, qui in pascha vel tonsuræ catholica non sunt ordinati ecclesiæ, iterum a catholico episcopo manus impositione confirmentur."—Ap. THORPE, p. 307.

the humble bishop to mount.[1] With admirable delicacy, Wilfrid assigned to this innocent usurper the care of continuing the task which had occupied and consoled himself during his disgrace. For three years Ceadda occupied the same position in Mercia which Wilfrid himself had occupied, aiding the noble efforts of the king, and the holy Queen Ermenilda, to destroy the last traces of idolatry. In the intervals of repose left him by his pastoral journeys, he inhabited a little monastery which he had built near his cathedral, that he might there continue his life of prayer and study with seven or eight monks, his friends. It was here that he died, leaving behind him a noble example of humility, wisdom, fervour, and voluntary poverty. The narrative of his last days was transmitted by the monk who attended him to the Venerable Bede, always so scrupulous in indicating the sources from which he drew the materials for his religious history of the English nation. "My father," said a disciple to the dying bishop, "dare I ask you a question?" "Ask what thou wilt." "I conjure you to tell me what are those sounds of celestial harmony which just now we heard, and which sometimes descend from heaven, and sometimes return thither; are they not the ineffable strains of angels?" "Thou hast then heard and recognised the voice from on high which must not be spoken of before my death. Yes; it is they. The angels are come to call me to that heaven which I have always loved and desired; they have promised to return in seven days to take me with them." And when the day of deliverance and recompense arrived, the witness of this happy death saw not only heaven open and the angels appearing; he seemed to see also the brother of the dying man, his inseparable companion in former days, and, like him, a bishop and monk, descending from the opening heaven to seek the soul of Ceadda and conduct it to eternal

[1] "Ipse cum sua manu levavit in equum, quia nimirum sanctum esse virum comperit."—BEDE, iv. 3.

happiness. Many details of this nature, floating on the bosom of an ocean of forgotten ages and races, show us how, among these rude converts, so rapidly transformed into austere monks and saints, natural affection preserved all its empire, and mingled, in sweet and holy union, with the grandeur and beauty of their supernatural vocation.[1]

Having thus regulated or re-arranged the government of souls in the two largest kingdoms of the Saxon confederation, Northumbria and Mercia, the venerable archbishop pursued, with an activity in no way relaxed by age, the task which the Holy See had assigned him. He successively traversed all the provinces of the island already occupied by Anglo-Saxons. With the aid of the former bishops, and of those whom he ordained wherever they were wanting, he applied himself, in all the kingdoms, to pacify the sanguinary feuds of princes and nobles, to re-establish canonical order and ecclesiastical discipline, to correct abuses, to spread good morals, and to regulate, according to Roman custom, the celebration of Easter.[2] He is believed to have originated on this occasion that ecclesiastical law which commanded all fathers of families to repeat daily, and to teach to their children, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in the vulgar tongue.[3]

Abbot Adrian accompanied him everywhere, and seconded him in all things. These two aged monks, one Asian and

[1] "Vocem suavissimam cantantium atque lætantium de cœlo ad terras usque descendere. . . . Obsecro ut dicas quod erat canticum illud lætantium. . . . Revera angelorum fuere spiritus qui me ad cœlestia, quæ semper amabam ac desiderabam, præmia vocare venerunt. . . . Scio hominem in hac insula adhuc in carne manentem qui . . . vidit animam Ceddi fratris ipsius cum agmine angelorum descendere de cœlo, et assumpta secum anima ejus, ad cœlestia regna redire."—BEDE, vi. 3. This brother was Bishop Cedd, who had acted as interpreter at Whitby.

[2] "Peragrata insula tota. . . . Libentissime ab omnibus suscipiebatur atque audiebatur . . . per omnia comitante et co-operante Adriano. . . . Gratiosi ad pacificandum invicem inimicos."—BEDE, iv. 2.

[3] HOOK, i. 152. I have not been able to find this rule among the Acts of Theodore, but it is several times repeated in the *Monumenta Ecclesiastica* of the following century. See THORPE, *passim*.

the other African, were received, listened to, and obeyed by the Anglo-Saxons with that affectionate deference which in Christian hearts triumphs so easily over the prejudices and opposition of a narrow nationality. They repaid the popular attachment by their unwearied zeal for the souls and hearts of the people, preaching to them evangelical truth, with that intelligent and practical solicitude which makes true apostles.

The authentic monuments of their zeal are all preserved in the imposing collection of moral and penal institutes known as the *Liber Pœnitentialis* of Archbishop Theodore,[1] which has served as the model of so many other analogous collections. It is there apparent that if great excesses and shameful disorders had already appeared among the new Christians of England, these were kept in check by all the resources of spiritual fatherhood and priestly vigilance. It is surprising to find among these Germanic populations the traces of refined corruption mingled with the brutal vices of barbarians; but the art and authority which could inflict for every sin, even when confessed and pardoned, a penalty either public or secret, according to the circumstances, is all the more admirable. The punishments are generally of excessive severity, induced, it would seem, by the rudeness of barbarous manners, on which it was necessary first to act by means of intimidation. No doubt they were soon practically evaded by the equivalents of alms and other good works. At the same time, in this code set forth by a Greek prelate sent from Rome, there appears no trace of Roman or Byzantine law. On the contrary, it embodies the entire penal system of the Germanic laws, founded on the principle which required a punishment for every offence, or a compensation for every punishment.[2] And as it is

[1] The most complete version is found in the great collection of Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*. Cf. Hook, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 169.

[2] See some curious details in Elmham, p. 206, on the foundation of a monastery due to the application of this system of compensation.

always pleasant to find a loving and tender heart among the masters and teachers of the people, it is delightful to read, at the end of one of the most ancient manuscripts of this formidable code, a few lines, in which the archbishop thus commends his work and his soul to a prelate, one of his friends: "I beseech thee, noble and pious bishop, to pour out at the feet of God the abundance of thy prayers for Theodore, the poor stranger whom thou lovest."[1]

In the course of this apostolic journey, Theodore naturally visited Lindisfarne, as well as the chief seats of the other dioceses. The metropolis of Celtic resistance was obliged to acknowledge the authority of the Roman metropolitan, who imprinted upon it the seal of subordination and union by dedicating, under the name and in honour of St. Peter, the monastic cathedral of the Celtic bishops which Bishop Aïdan had commenced to build, in the Scottish mode, and entirely in wood, many years before.[2]

It is to these pastoral visits of Archbishop Theodore that all agree in tracing back the commencement of parochial organisation,—above all, in the south of England. Until then, the monasteries had been almost the only permanent centres of faith and religious instruction. The bishops issued from their monasteries to preach and to baptize;

[1] "Te nam, sancte speculator,
Verbi Dei digne dator,
Pontificum ditum decor,
Hæddi, pie presul, precor,
Pro me tuo peregrino
Preces funde Theodore."

This was addressed to Hedda, Bishop of the West Saxons at Winchester in 676, much praised by Bede, v. 18. A distinction must be made between the singer Hedd or Eddi, biographer of Wilfrid; Bishop Hedda, his contemporary and colleague at Winchester; Bishop Ceadda, who supplanted him at York; and Bishop Cedd, brother of Ceadda. The narrator condemned to open a way through this forest of obscure names, so easily confounded, and so subject to infinite alteration from the pens of more recent annalists, may well claim the sympathy of his readers.

[2] BEDE, iii. 25.

they were constantly wayfaring.[1] The monks, especially those of the Celtic monasteries, traversed the country, stopping at different stations previously indicated to administer the sacraments, just as is now done in lands under the charge of missionaries, and in certain districts of Ireland.[2] But churches, regularly served by monks or secular priests, were speedily built on the continually increasing estates of the great abbeys and monastic cathedrals. The kings and nobles obtained from bishops and abbots the right of choosing in the monastery, or among the cathedral clergy, some priests who might, for the good of their souls, accompany them on their expeditions, or live with them in their rural residences. Theodore availed himself of this custom to lay the foundations of a parochial system, by persuading the princes and great proprietors to build churches on their domains, and to attach to them a resident priest, with an endowment in land or in fixed rents; in return for which they should have the right of choosing their priests. From this right has grown the system of church patronage, such as it now subsists in England, with the special impost, not yet abolished, called church-rate, levied on all the proprietors of a parish for the keeping of the church in repair: so true is it that everything bears the trace of solidity and permanence in the country which twelve centuries ago was constituted as a nation by that union of the Church with the Anglo-Saon race, of which Italian and Greek monks such as Theodore and Augustin were the plenipotentiaries.[3]

[1] "Longe lateque omnia pervagatus." This is the eulogy which falls perpetually from the pen of Bede.

[2] See above, pages 294 to 296, the first missions in Northumbria.

[3] "Hic excitavit fidelium voluntatem ut in civitatibus et villis ecclesias fabricarentur, parochias distinguerent, et assensus regios his procuravit; ut si qui sufficientes essent super proprium fundum construere ecclesias earumdem perpetuo patronato gauderent; si inter limites alterius alicujus dominii ecclesias facerent, ejusdem fundi domini notarentur pro patronis."—THOS. DE ELMHAM, *Hist. Monast. S. Augustini*, p. 289; HOOK, i. 159. Cf. LAPPENBERG, p. 190; KEMBLE, c. 9; and, above all, LINGARD, *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 156–197. The secular

Nearly all the present names of counties date from this epoch. All the dioceses of that time exist still; everything has remained so unchanged, that a map of the country in the tenth century might serve for to-day; while there remains not one single trace of the ancient territorial divisions of France and Germany.

After having thus laid the foundation of parishes, it was Theodore's desire to proceed to a new episcopal division. Hitherto, except in Kent, each kingdom of the Heptarchy had formed a diocese, each king choosing to have one bishop of his own, and only one. Northumbria, long divided into two kingdoms, had never formed more than one diocese, of which the seat was sometimes in the ancient Roman metropolis of York, sometimes in the sacred isle of Lindisfarne; and this diocese, even after a partial division, remained so vast that the Venerable Bede mentions a large number of districts which had never yet been visited by their bishop.

The extreme inequality of extent and population in the different Saxon kingdoms, which a single glance at the map will make apparent, had thus led to a similar difference between the dioceses; those of the north and the centre being far too large for the administration of one man. But Theodore here met with the resistance which is almost always produced in similar cases. He convoked a council at Hertford in the fourth year of his pontificate, the first ever held in the Anglo-Saxon Church; but was obliged to adjourn his proposition, as he himself relates in the official report of the deliberations of this assembly, dictated by himself to his notary.[1] At the same time, he reserved to himself the

priests placed in these parishes took afterwards the name of mass-priests.

[1] "Nomum capitulum in commune tractatum est, ut plures episcopi, crescente numero fidelium, augerentur: sed de hac ad præsens siluimus." BEDE, iv. 5. This notary Titillo, whose presence is proved by Theodore and Bede, seems to us to answer the objection raised by Kemble to the authenticity of Ethelbert's donation to Augustin on account of the mention of a referendary in that document.

means of returning to the charge by decreeing that the national council should meet once a year at a place called Cloveshoe, according to Saxon fashion, in the open air. He was happier, however, in the two canons regarding monasteries which he proposed, and which were unanimously adopted by the bishops and numerous abbots attached to the Roman ritual who composed the council.[1] Of these canons, naturally marked by the Benedictine spirit, since the greater part of the bishops in the council were sons of St. Benedict, the first forbade bishops to disturb monasteries in any way, or to despoil them of their goods; the second forbade monks to pass from one monastery to another without the permission of the abbot. This was a consecration of the vow of *stability*, which, though often neglected, was not the less an essential distinction of the order of St. Benedict from the great monastic communities of the East or of Celtic countries.[2]

The monasteries having been thus placed under the most imposing safeguard by the Greek metropolitan of England, there yet remained for him, as well as for his African assistant, Adrian, an intellectual and literary development as worthy of the admiration as of the gratitude of posterity. Both were profoundly attached to and imbued with, not only ecclesiastical knowledge, but secular learning, that double intellectual current of which the middle ages never ceased

[1] "Concilium episcoporum, una cum eis qui canonice patrum statuta et deligerent et nossent, magistris ecclesiæ pluribus."—BEDE. iv. 5. Of the eight bishops then in England, five assisted in person at the council, and Wilfrid was represented there by his envoys.

[2] "*Tertium.* Ut quæque monasteria Deo consecrata sunt, nulli episcoporum liceat ea in aliquo inquietare, nec quicquam de eorum rebus violenter abstrahere. *Quartum.* Ut ipsi monachi non migrent de loco ad locum, hoc est, de monasterio ad monasterium, nisi per demissionem proprii abbatis, sed in ea permaneant obedientia quam tempore suæ conversionis promiserunt."—BEDE, iv. 5. That Theodore did not intend to permit the monasteries to absorb all religious life, to the detriment of the secular clergy, is proved by this article of the *pœnitentialis:* "Nec libertas monasterii est pœnitentiam sæcularibus judicare, quia proprie clericorum est."—THORPE, p. 307.

to give examples. Theodore had brought with him a copy of Homer, which he read perpetually, and which was long preserved and admired by his ecclesiastical descendants.[1] They gathered round them, in the monasteries where they lived or which they visited, a crowd of young and ardent disciples, whom they led daily to the fountain of knowledge. While explaining Holy Scripture to them with particular care, they taught their scholars also ecclesiastical astronomy and arithmetic, which served to establish the Paschal computation, and afterwards the art of composing Latin verses. But it was chiefly the study of the two classic tongues which flourished under their care. These became so general that, sixty years after, there were still monks trained in the school of Adrian and Theodore who spoke Greek and Latin as readily as Anglo-Saxon. At the same time, music and chanting, hitherto cultivated only in the monasteries of Canterbury and by the deacon James at York, spread all over England.[2] Monasteries thus transformed into schools and homes of scientific study could not but spread a taste and respect for intellectual life, not only among the clergy, but also among their lay-protectors, the friends and neighbours of each community. Under the powerful impulse given to it by the two Roman monks, England became almost as important a literary centre as Ireland or Italy.[3]

While recalling this peaceful and luminous period of which Theodore and Adrian were the stars, the enthusiasm of the Venerable Bede breaks out into a kind of dithyramb: "Never," he says, "since the Anglo-Saxons landed in Britain, had more happy days been known. We had Christian kings,

[1] GODWIN, *De Præsulibus Angliæ*, p. 41.

[2] "Literis sacris simul et sæcularibus abundanter ambo instructi, congregata discipulorum caterva, scientiæ salutaris quotidie fluminia irrigandis eorum cordibus emanabant. . . . Sed et sonos cantandi in ecclesia. . . . Ab hoc tempore per omnes Anglorum ecclesias discere cœperunt."—BEDE, iv. 2.

[3] HOOK, t. i. p. 165. MIGNET, *Mémoire sur la Conversion de l'Allemagne par les Moines*, p. 25.

at whose bravery the barbarous nations trembled. All hearts were inflamed by the hope of those celestial joys which had just been preached to them; and whosoever wished to be instructed in sacred learning found the masters that he needed close at hand."[1]

Let us add, to characterise with more precision this pontificate of Theodore, that he was the last foreign missionary called to occupy the metropolitan dignity in England, and that the Greek monk succeeded, as has been justly remarked, in transforming into an indigenous and national establishment, into a public and social institution, that which had hitherto been only a missionary church. This transformation could only have been made by that special and supreme authority with which, at the demand of the Anglo-Saxons themselves, the Oriental archbishop had been invested by the Holy See, and the result was to give to the Popes a whole nation as a lever for their future action both upon nations already Christian and upon those which still remained to be converted.

[1] "Neque unquam prorsus feliciora fuere tempora . . . dum omnium vota ad nuper audita cœlestis regni gaudia penderent."—BEDE, iv. 2.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

I

IONA

NOTES OF A VISIT MADE IN AUGUST 1862

(See pages 38 and 151.)

"To each voyager
Some ragged child holds up for sale a store
Of wave-worn pebbles. . . .
How sad a welcome!
Where once came monk and nun with gentle stir
Blessings to give, news ask, or suit prefer. . . .
Think, proud philosopher!
Fallen though she be, this Glory of the West,
Still on her sons the beams of mercy shine;
And hopes, perhaps, more heavenly bright than thine,
A grace by thee unsought, and unpossesst,
A faith more fixed, a rapture more divine,
Shall gild their passage to eternal rest."

—WORDSWORTH.

THE traveller who visits Iona in the hope of finding imposing ruins or picturesque sites is singularly disappointed in his expectation. Nothing, as has been already stated, can be less attractive than this island, at first sight at least. At view of its flat and naked surface a sense of that painful desolation which is so well expressed by the word *bleak*, untranslatable in French, strikes the traveller, and he involuntarily turns his eyes from that low and sandy shore to the lofty mountains of the neighbouring isles and coasts. After a time, however, a sweet and salutary impression is evolved from the grave, calm, and lonely aspect of a place so celebrated in spiritual history. The spirit is a little reassured, and

the visitor takes his way through the poor hamlet, which is the only inhabited place on the island, towards the ruins of which so many learned and splendid descriptions have been written. Here again there is a fresh disappointment. These ruins have nothing about them that is imposing—nothing, above all, absolutely nothing, that recalls St. Columba, unless it be two or three inscriptions in the Irish tongue (*Eirsch* or *Erse*), which was his language. But they are not the less of great interest to the Catholic archæologist, since they are all connected with the cloistral and ecclesiastical foundations which succeeded to the monastery of Columba. Turning to the north, after passing through the village, you come first to the remains of a convent of canonesses, the last foundation of the twelfth century, but which, for a little, survived the Reformation. Transformed into a stable, then into a quarry, the roofless church still exists; and in it is to be seen the tomb of the last prioress, Anna Macdonald, of the race of the *Lords of the Isles*, who died in 1543. Thence you pass to the famous cemetery, which was for so many centuries the last asylum of kings and princes, nobles and prelates, and of the chiefs of the clans and communities of all the neighbouring districts, and—as a report made in 1594 says—"of the best people of all the isles, and consequently the holiest and most honourable place in Scotland." At that epoch were still to be seen three great mausoleums with the following inscriptions:—

TUMULUS REGUM SCOTIÆ.
TUMULUS REGUM HIBERNIÆ.
TUMULUS REGUM NORWEGIÆ.

There was even the tomb of a king of France, whose name is not given, but who must have abdicated before his death.

Nothing is now shown of these mausoleums except the site. A tradition, more or less authentic, decides that eight Norwegian kings or princes were interred at Iona, four kings of Ireland, and forty-eight Scottish kings. But all historians agree in stating that, from the fabulous times of Fergus until Macbeth, Iona was the ordinary burying-place of the kings and nobles of the Scottish race, and even of some Saxon princes, such as Egfrid, king of the Northumbrians, who died in 685.[1] Shakespeare, with his cus-

[1] "Ejus corpus in Hii insula Columbæ sepultum."—SIMEON DUNELM, ap. TWYDEN, *Scriptor.*, p. 3.

tomary fidelity to national tradition, has not failed to send the body of Macbeth's victim to be buried at Iona.[1]

The burial-place of the kings was not transferred to the abbey of Dunfermline until the time of Malcolm Canmore, the conqueror and successor of Macbeth, and the husband of St. Margaret.

At present this cemetery contains eight or nine rows of flat tombs very close to each other. Most of these are of blue stone, and covered with figures sculptured in relief, with inscriptions and coats-of-arms. On many of them may be distinguished the galley which was the heraldic ensign of the Macdonalds, *Lords of the Isles*—the greatest house of the north of Scotland. Among them is shown the tomb of the contemporary of the great king Robert Bruce and the hero of the poem of Walter Scott, who died in 1387. And there are still to be seen tombs bearing the arms of the Macdougalls, Lords of Lorn, the Macleods, Mackinnons, Macquaries, and especially Macleans—that is to say, of all the chiefs of the clans of the adjacent districts, along with several tombs of bishops, priors, and other ecclesiastics of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In the centre of the burying-ground stands a ruined chapel, called St. Oran's, from the name of the first of the Irish monks who died after their landing on the island. It is 30 feet long by 15 broad, with a fine semicircular western door. It is the most interesting, and perhaps the oldest monument of the island, for it is held to have been built by the sainted Queen Margaret, wife of Malcolm Canmore († 1093), mother of the King St. David, one of the most touching figures in the history of Scotland and of Christendom. She was the regeneratrix of faith and piety in Scotland, and was animated by a great devotion to St. Columba, by whose intervention she obtained her only son, after having long been without children.[2]

Before reaching the burying-ground, and on leaving it, two large stone crosses are seen, each of a single block, and from 12 to 14 feet high—the one called Maclean's, and the other St. Martin's—the only two which remain of 360, which are said to have formerly existed on the island. Both, fixed on a pedestal of red granite, are long and slender in form, covered over with sculptured orna-

[1] See the passage quoted, p. 143, note.

[2] Fordun, *Scoti-Chronicon*, v. 37. Reeves's *Adamnan*, pp. xxx. cdx.

ments, in a style at once graceful and quaint, partially hidden by the moss. One of them, Maclean's cross, is said to be that of which Adamnan speaks in his *Life of Columba*. It is difficult to understand how, with the scanty means at their disposal in an age so remote, it was possible to quarry, sculpture, transport, and erect blocks of granite of such a size.

At last we reach the Cathedral, or rather the Abbey Church, a large oblong edifice, in red and grey granite, 166 feet in length, 70 in breadth at the transept, ruined and roofless, like all the others, but still retaining all its walls, and also several large cylindrical columns rudely sculptured, with the tombs of an abbot of the Clan Mackinnon, date 1500, and different chiefs of the Macleans. Over the cross of the transept rises a square tower, which is seen far off at sea, and is lighted by windows pierced in the stone, in unglazed lozenges and circles, such as are still found at Villers, in Brabant, and at St. Vincent and Anastasius, near Rome.[1] The end of the choir is square, and cannot be older than the fourteenth century; but other portions of the church are of the twelfth and thirteenth. It has, like the beautiful Abbey Church of Kelso, in the south of Scotland, this peculiarity, that the choir is twice as long as the nave.

The sombre and sad aspect of all these ruins is owing in part to the absence of all verdure, and of that ivy which, especially in the British Isles, adorns elsewhere the ruins of the past.

This church became, in the fourteenth century, the cathedral of the bishopric of the Isles, the titular bishop of which afterwards resided at *Man*, one of the *Sudereys*—that is, the isles lying south of the point of Ardnamurchan, and distinct from the *Norderneys*, to the north of that cape, a division which dates from the times of the Norwegians. Hence the title of *Episcopus Sodorensis*, Bishop of *Sodor and Man*. Iona became the cathedral of the bishopric of the Scottish Isles after the union of Man to England under Edward I.

After the Reformation, and the suppression of all the bishopries and monasteries, decreed in 1561 by the Convention of Estates, the Calvinistic Synod of Argyll gave over all the sacred edifices

[1] See upon these stone windows the curious works of M. Albert Lenoir, in his *Architecture Monastique*, 1st part, pp. 133, 301, and of M. Ed. Didron, *Annales Archéologiques*, vol. xxiii. pp. 45, 201.

of Iona to a horde of pillagers, who reduced them to the condition in which they are now seen. During the whole of the eighteenth century the ruins and the cemetery lay desert: the cathedral was made into a stable; and thus was accomplished the prophecy in Irish verse ascribed to Columba, according to which a time was to come when the chants of the monks should give place to the lowing of oxen. The 360 crosses which covered the soil of the holy island disappeared during this period, most of them being thrown into the sea. Some were conveyed to Mull and to the adjacent islands, and one is shown at Campbeltown—a monolith of blue granite, incrusted with sculptures. In this same island of Mull is to be observed a line of isolated columns leading to the point of embarkation for Iona, and destined, according to local tradition, to guide the pilgrims of old to the sacred isle. (Note of the Rev. T. Maclauchlan, read before the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, February 1863.)

Since 1693 the island has belonged to the Dukes of Argyll, chiefs of the great clan Campbell, who watch over the preservation of the ruins. It brings them an annual revenue of about £300. It contains a population of 350 souls, all Presbyterians. This small population—which lives on the produce of the fisheries and of a few wretched fields manured with seaweed, where potatoes, barley, and rye are grown, but where even oats refuse to thrive—offers, notwithstanding, the curious spectacle which is found in many of even the pettiest villages in Scotland: it has two churches, and forms two congregations; the one connected with the *official* or *Established* worship, whose ministers are nominated by the lay patrons, and supported by the ancient property of the Church; and the other attached to the "*Free Kirk*" —that is, a body whose ministers are elected by the people and maintained by their voluntary offerings.

The most interesting works to be consulted upon this celebrated island are, first of all, the Report of Archdeacon Munro in 1594; then Johnson's *Journey to the Hebrides;* Pennant's *Tour in the Hebrides;* N. D. Graham's *Antiquities of Iona*, London, 1850, in quarto, with plates; and finally, a good article in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for November 1861.

We cannot quit Iona without adding a word on the neighbouring isle of Staffa, which contains the famous grotto of Fingal. It

was not really known to the world till the visit of Sir Joseph Banks in August 1772. There is no previous mention of it, not even in the journey of the great Johnson, although it lies within sight of Iona, which closes the horizon on the south, as seen from the cave—a juxtaposition which has inspired Walter Scott with these beautiful lines :—

> "Where, as to shame the temples decked
> By skill of earthly architect,
> Nature herself, it seems, would raise
> A minster to her Maker's praise. . . .
> Nor doth its entrance front in vain
> To old Iona's holy fane,
> That nature's voice might seem to say,
> 'Well hast thou done, frail child of clay!
> Thy humble powers that stately shrine
> Tasked high and hard—but witness mine!'"

The English, and travellers in general, profess a great enthusiasm for this cave, which, as every one knows, forms an immense vault, into which the sea penetrates, and which rests on rows of polygonal basaltic columns, ranged like the cells of a beehive. Sir Robert Peel, in a speech in 1837, compared the pulsations of the Atlantic which roll into this sanctuary to the majestic tones of the organ; but he adds, "The solemn harmony of the waves chants the praises of the Lord in a note far more sublime than that of any human instrument." This sound is, in fact, the grandest thing about this famous cave. The rest is a wonder of nature far inferior, it seems to us, to the wonders of art, and especially of Christian art. The grotto of Fingal is but 66 feet high by 42 broad, and 227 long. What is that beside our grand cathedrals and monastic churches, such as Cluny or Vezelay?

II

CONCLUSIONS OF THE TWO PAPERS OF M. VARIN

ON THE CAUSES OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BRITISH CHURCH AND THE CHURCH OF ROME

(*Recueil des Mémoires présentés par divers Savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions*—1st Series, 1858.)

(See page 217.)

FIRST ARTICLE

The struggle maintained by the three Celtic nations (Britons, Picts, and Scots) against the Roman apostles of the Saxon colony resulted, according to the opinion of the learned Anglicans of the last three centuries, from the fact that Britain had received the faith from Asia, and would thus have communicated anti-Roman doctrines to the Picts and Scots. The three populations, instructed by Asiatics, would naturally reject the religious yoke which Rome tried to lay on them (under the pretext of evangelising the Anglo-Saxons) no less than the political yoke of the new conquerors. But,

1. There *never* was anything in common in the usages of Asia and those in which the three insular nations differed from the Roman Church.

2. The origin of these secondary differences, in as far as the Picts and Scots are concerned, is found in the subsequent substitution of British usages for those which, in the beginning, these same people received direct from Rome.

3. These usages, even among the Britons, did not extend back to the origin of Christianity in the British Isles. They had their sources in circumstances purely accidental, and completely opposed to any sentiment hostile to the Roman Church.

4. The Picts and Scots received the light of the Gospel originally

from Rome, and not from Britain. They already occupied at that period the ground which a school of learned men believe them only to have attained at a later date.

SECOND ARTICLE

1. The differences between Rome and Britain were less *numerous*, less *important*, and, above all, of *later date* than the recent writers represent.

2. They indicate no relation between Britain and Asia.

3. They prove nothing against Rome: of the three nations which composed the British Church, *two* had from the first adopted the Roman usages.

4. As to the *six* controverted customs,

Three had their origin in a national, and not at all in an Asiatic feeling—to wit,

A. The *tonsure*—a national and even Druidic way of dressing the hair—that of the wise men, who are discussed in the lives of the Irish saints as opposing great obstacles to any modifications of the faith;

B. The national liturgy for the mass, such as existed in *all* the Churches evangelised by Rome, Gaul, Spain, &c.;

C. Aversion for the Roman clergy, repelled by patriotic sentiment, as apostles of the Saxon race;

And *three* in mistaken adhesion to the very doctrines of Rome:

D. The ceremonies supplementary to *baptism*, of which Bede speaks, ii. 2; but which the islanders would not recognise because their first apostles, who had come from Rome, had told them nothing about them;

E. The paschal *computation* (Easter), which the Britons maintained as they had received it at first from Rome, without wishing to adopt the reform subsequently introduced by the Popes;

F. The celibacy of the clergy, as severely observed by the Britons as by the Roman clergy—only they accepted the double monasteries known in the East: and this is the only way in which any of the traditions of the East got a footing in the extreme West.

On the three principal points—1. The supremacy of Rome; 2. The celebration of Easter; 3. The marriage of the priests—the British Church in no way differs from other Western Churches,—

at least, during the first five centuries. On the three secondary points—1. The tonsure; 2. The administration of baptism; 3. The liturgy—there were differences; but they were as great between Britain and the East as between Britain and Italy.

III

LINDISFARNE

(See page 291.)

Lindisfarne at present bears the name of *Holy Island*, which was given it in 1093 by the monks, then transferred to Durham, in memory of the number of monks who were massacred at the Danish invasion, and venerated as martyrs.

Except the dark and scarcely visible island, situated on the south-west, fifty fathoms from the shore, which is still called St. Cuthbert's Isle, and where it is said some remains of his cell are to be seen, the Holy Island of Lindisfarne retains no material trace either of the dwelling-place of the great and popular saint, or of the ancient monastic cathedral of Northumberland. But it possesses the important and very picturesque ruins of the church, rebuilt in 1093 by Bishop Carilef. This bishop immortalised himself by the construction of the magnificent cathedral of Durham, of which the church of Lindisfarne, built of fine red stone like the churches on the Rhine, is a dependence. It is in the Roman or purest Norman style, except the choir and its rectangular heading, which were added in the thirteenth century. Its architect was the monk Eadward, so much praised by Reginald in his *Libellus de Miraculis Cuthberti*, who brought from the neighbouring city, with the eager aid of the inhabitants, the good stone which was wanting at Lindisfarne, that of the island being too friable and apt to be destroyed by the sea-spray. A double diagonal arch, ornamented with rich toothed mouldings, is the only remaining relic of the central vault of the transept, between the nave and choir. This arch, thrown from the north-western to the south-eastern corner, with the appearance of being suspended in the air, traces its outline upon the sky with boldness and majesty. It is four-and-twenty English feet in diameter, and rises to a height of

forty-four feet above the ground, which is itself heightened by ruins. The lower side of the north is still entire, as well as two bays of the same side of the nave, which was composed of six. The ancient choir ended in a circular apse; the half of it remains, disfigured and mutilated by a square heading in materials different from the rest. The transept has two circular apses, in the same style as the choir. The reverse of the western front, in the interior of the church, has a fine effect. The entire ruin is very well rendered in the *Architectural Antiquities of Durham*, by Billings.

Some remains of the ancient monastery are still to be seen round the church. A fine fortress of the sixteenth century, built under Queen Elizabeth, occupies a conical mole at the southern extremity of the island.

A very minute description of Lindisfarne is to be found in the work of the learned James Raine, entitled *The History and Antiquities of North Durham*, or the shires of Norham, Island, and Bedlington, now united in the county of Northumberland: London, 1852. The article *Holy Island* is very long: it goes into minute details of the priory founded there in 1095, and is accompanied by an engraving made in 1728 by Buck, and which shows the state of the ruins at that period: they do not seem to have been more considerable then than at present.

Bamborough, the ancient residence of the kings of Northumbria, situated on the shore in sight of Lindisfarne, is placed on an immense rock, which commands the sea and all the surrounding country: the castle, much modernised, has been made by Lord Crewe into a charitable school and various establishments devoted to the work of salvage, which is so necessary and so energetically directed upon that dangerous coast.

I cannot resist the temptation of quoting here Walter Scott's fine lines, which will console the reader for the dryness of the preceding details, and which exactly depict the site of Lindisfarne, except in respect to the grandeur of the ruins: the English are disposed to exaggerate the effect of the size of their historical monuments, which are almost always less than our own.

> "And now the vessel skirts the strand
> Of mountainous Northumberland.
> . . . . .
> Thy tower, proud Bamborough, marked they there,
> King Ida's castle, huge and square,

From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reached the Holy Island's bay.
The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain:
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day the waves efface
Of staves and sandalled feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The castle with its battled walls,
The ancient monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.
In Saxon strength that Abbey frowned,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alley walk
To emulate in stone.
On the deep walls, the heathen Dane
Had poured his impious rage in vain;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilded in a later style,
Showed where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And mouldered in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower;
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued."

—*Marmion*, cant. ii.

IV

PETERBOROUGH

(See page 409.)

This celebrated monastery has been the origin of an important town in Northamptonshire, which sends two members to the House of Commons, and was made into a bishopric of the Anglican Church by Henry VIII. The last abbot became bishop in 1541, and the abbey church was transformed into the cathedral of the new bishopric—an arrangement which still continues.

Peterborough was built on an isle in the marshy district which, at the time of the Saxon occupation, included a considerable portion of the existing counties of Northampton, Cambridge, Lincoln, and Norfolk, and which is still known as *the Fens*. There existed in these marshes some spots more solid, which could even be made into pasturage, and the industry of the monks soon brought them under cultivation. From this is derived the primitive name of Peterborough, *Medehamstede*, or, in modern English, *the Home in the Meadows*. Such was also the origin of the still celebrated abbeys of Ely and Croyland, and of several others, Ramsey, Thorney, Kirkstead, &c. This district is now one of the most fertile parts of England.

There are no remains existing of the church of the monastery built in the seventh century by the kings of the Mercians. The Danes destroyed it at their great invasion in 870, after having slaughtered all the monks. It was rebuilt a century later, and again dedicated to St. Peter by the famous Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, but afterwards destroyed by accidental fires in 1067 and in 1116. It was in 1118, after the last of these fires, that the present building was commenced by the abbot John of Seez: the choir was consecrated in 1143, and the chapels, to the east of the transept, from 1133 to 1145, under a very distinguished abbot, Martin du Bec. The existing nave, begun in 1155, was not finished till towards 1190. The aisles of the nave date from 1117 and 1143.

Like all English cathedrals, Peterborough has preserved its vast dependencies, and stands in the midst of gardens, flowery lawns,

and groves, which heighten its grandeur and beauty. The tranquil majesty of the close which surrounds it naturally recalls to mind its monastic origin; the silence and serenity which reign there are scarcely disturbed, except by the flight or the song of birds, whose nests are built in the towers and buttresses of the immense church. The great and numerous buildings which shut in this close seem to reproduce, in part at least, the cloisters of the great abbey before its secularisation. The entrance from the town into the sacred enclosure is by a gateway, in the form of a square tower, pierced by an arched passage, and surmounted by a chapel dedicated to St. Nicholas, but used at present as a music school. To the left is another chapel dedicated to St. Thomas-à-Becket, which serves for the use of the choristers. Beyond this gateway is the spacious enclosure surrounding the church; to the right and to the south is the old abbatial palace—now the bishop's—built in 1319, its grand entrance flanked by two statues, larger than life, of an abbot and a monk. To the left and north is the deanery, a fine building of the date of 1518. But the eyes of visitors are at once attracted and enchanted by the magnificent western façade of the abbey church. This façade, built between 1200 and 1227, in the early ogival style, called in England *Early English*, is equally original and splendid; it is said, not without reason, to have no equal among the specimens of Christian architecture. It is composed of three porches or ogival doorways, equal in height, which occupy the whole elevation of the façade; they are surmounted by three triangular gables or frontals, and flanked north and south by two square towers of great elegance, with spires. The depth of these doorways is as astonishing as their height; the sides of the inner walls and the whole of the façade are lavishly enriched with sculpture, and decorated wherever it is possible with bays and roses in the finest style. The whole effect is truly wonderful, thanks to the immense dimensions of this triple porch and the masses of light and shade caused by the depths of the arches.

The two façades of the grand transept, to the north and south, flanked by polygonal turrets, and of Roman or Norman architecture, are also extremely beautiful. Nothing can be finer than the north façade with its seven tiers of arches and vaulted bays. This façade is, externally, the best preserved and most interesting part of the ancient Norman church, which is there seen without the

disfigurement of those additions in the perpendicular or flamboyant style which have been made to the aisles of the nave, the mullions of the triforium, the circumference of the choir, and even in certain parts of the great western façade.

The circular apse of the primitive church may also be seen rising above the quadrilateral oblong which was added in the sixteenth century, and in spite of the disparity caused by the flamboyant architecture of the great windows of this apse, its effect is still remarkable. Besides the great transept, situated between the choir and the nave, there is another of smaller dimensions situated between the nave and the western façade, and flanked by four turrets, two with battlemented terraces, and two with spires, already mentioned in reference to the principal façade. It has also a central tower, which is low and ungraceful, and which, moreover, is decorated at the four corners with those hideous bell towers which disfigure a large proportion of English steeples.

Peterborough Cathedral thus possesses a great number of towers and turrets, but their want of height diminishes their effect; and this is the case also with the whole of the roof, which, as in most English cathedrals, is so low as to wound the eye by the absence of that perfect proportion between the height and length of the building to which we are accustomed in those of France and Germany.

But whatever may be wanting to the exterior of Peterborough is fully compensated by the majestic and solemn beauty of the interior. I remember no church in the world whose whole aspect is, at the first glance, more striking. Every detail appears to be of the purest Roman or Norman art. And it is so especially in the central nave, which is of extraordinary length,[1] with eleven bays (Nôtre Dame in Paris has only seven) divided by huge columns alternately round and octangular. The roof, instead of being vaulted, has a ceiling of wood, believed to be of the same date as the edifice, and covered with old paintings, recalling those lately restored with such success in the Church of St. Godehard at Hildesheim. The triforium, of which each bay is composed only of a pointed arch, is of a grand simplicity, and neutralises the

[1] It is 266 English feet in length, 35 wide, and 85 high. The total length of the church is 479 feet: the western façade is 156. The lantern of the central tower is only 135 feet high.

unfortunate effect of the flamboyant windows of the clerestory, the pointed bays of which are besides even lower than those of the triforium.

The aisles of the nave are in the same style, but with vaulted roofs in stone; their inner walls are entirely covered with vaulted and interlaced arches: unfortunately the windows of these aisles have been modernised in the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

The grand transept is also in the finest Norman style, and rivals the nave in size and magnificence; it has four bays in each arm, and six of these bays open on six chapels arranged parallel to the choir, in the manner of the Cistercian churches. The two façades of this transept, to the north and south, are pierced with three rows of vaulted bays, with mullions and trefoils.

The choir has four bays, and ends in an apse in four parts. But this apse itself is imbedded in a vast oblong construction much lower than the rest of the church. Here we find again the unpleasing fashion of finishing the finest churches with a parallelogram, to which English architects have always had a leaning, and which gives to their buildings a character so inferior to ours. This addition, called the Lady Chapel, was built in 1496. It has a richly sculptured vault of the special form of the English buildings of that period, such as may be seen at King's College, Cambridge, and at Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster.

Within the choir is the oldest monument in the church, that of Abbot Hedda, massacred by the Danes in 870. It is in the form of a shrine, with statues of our Lord and the twelve apostles in bas-relief. It is attributed to Goodric, who was abbot from 1099 to 1103.

A little further on may be seen the gravestone, scarcely visible, of Catherine of Arragon, the first wife of Henry VIII., and opposite the place where the body of Mary Stuart was buried after her execution at the neighbouring Castle of Fotheringay, and where it remained until her son James I. removed it to Westminster. These two great victims to the Reformation thus slept together in the old abbatial church of Peterborough, while the wicked and sanguinary Elizabeth finished her triumphal reign in peace.

This beautiful church cannot give us an idea of the buildings of Anglo-Saxon times; but it represents in all their majesty the great constructions of one of the greatest epochs of monastic his-

tory, that of the twelfth century, the era of St. Bernard and Peter the Venerable.[1]

I reserve for another volume my notes on the present state of two other monasteries, Croyland and Ely, which, from their commencement, were reckoned among the most celebrated in England, but the great splendour of which was later than the epoch of which I have hitherto spoken.

July 1862.

[1] An abridged history of this great monastery may be found in the biographical notes on its abbots, published by Stevens, *Continuation of Dugdale;* London, 1722, vol. i. p. 496. I take this occasion of recommending to all lovers of Christian antiquities this excellent work, full of curious information and of zeal against the sacrilegious profaners of the Catholic monuments and institutions of England.

END OF VOL. III.

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HUMBRIA

DEIRIAN DYNASTY.

Yffii,
Tenth in descent from Odin.

ELLA, 559–588.

Elfric.

EDWIN, 616–633, m. St. Ethelburga of Kent.

Acha, m. Ethelfrid, the Ravager.

OSRIC, 633–634.

OSWIN, 645–651, martyr.

1. Osfrid, killed with his father.
2. Edfrid, killed after his father.
3. *Eanfleda*, born 626, wife of Oswy, King of Bernicia, afterwards a nun at Whitby under her daughter.

Hereswitha, m. a king of E. Anglia (Anna or Edelher).

ALCHFRID, associated with his father in the kingdom 658, m. the daughter of Penda, King of Mercia.

Idreda, ng Egfrid, nicia, f Ely, 79.

St. Sexburga, Queen of Kent, Abbess of Ely after her sister.

Aldulf, King of Mercia, 663–713.

Edburga, Abbess of Repton.

IIS PERIOD

547. Ida.
559. Ella.
592. Ethelfr
616. Edwin.

737. Eadbert, descended from Eadric, another son of Ida, and brother of Archbishop Egbert, the correspondent of Bede.

For end of Vol. III.]

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF NORTHUMBRIA

BERNICIAN DYNASTY.

IDA, THE MAN OF FIRE.
Ninth in descent from Odin.
547–559.

Ethelric. — Eadric. — Occa.

ETHELFRID, THE RAVAGER,
592–617.
m. *Acha*, daughter of Ella.

EANFRID, 633–634.

OSWALD, 635–642, m. *Kineburga* of Wessex.

ETHELWALD, provincial king in Deira.

OSWY, 642–670, m. *Eanfleda*, daughter of Edwin.

St. Ebba, d. 684, Abbess of Coldingham.

ALCHFRID, associated with his father in the kingdom 658, m. the daughter of Penda, King of Mercia.

Alchfleda, m. Peada, son of Penda, King of Mercia.

EGFRID, 670–685, m. 1st, *St. Etheldreda*, afterwards Abbess of Ely; 2nd, *Ermenburga*, a nun after her widowhood.

Alfwin, killed in 675.

ALDFRID, 685–705, m. *St. Cuthburga*, afterwards Abbess of Winbourne.

Ediedа, 654, d. 715, Abbess of Whitby after Hilda.

Osthrida, d. 697, m. Ethelred, King of Mercia.

OSRED, 705–716. — OSRIC, 718–729.

DEIRIAN DYNASTY.

Yffi,
Tenth in descent from Odin.

ELLA, 559–588. — Elfric.

N. N. — EDWIN, 616–633, m. St Ethelburga of Kent. — *Acha*, m. Ethelfrid, the Ravager. — OSRIC, 633–634.

Hereric, d. 616, m. *Bregeswida*.

1. Osfrid, killed with his father.
2. Edfrid, killed after his father.
3. *Eanfleda*, born 626, wife of Oswy, King of Bernicia, afterwards a nun at Whitby under her daughter.

OSWIN, 645–651, martyr.

St. Hilda, b. 614, d. 680, Abbess of Whitby.

Hereswitha, m. a king of E. Anglia (Anna or Edelher).

St. Etheldreda, m. 659, King Egfrid, of Bernicia, Abbess of Ely, d. 679.

St. Sexburga, Queen of Kent, Abbess of Ely after her sister.

Aldulf, King of Mercia, 663–713.

Edburga, Abbess of Repton

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF NORTHUMBRIA AT THIS PERIOD

547. Ida.
559. Ella.
592. Ethelfrid.
610. Edwin.

633. Osric and Eanfrid.
635. Oswald.
642. Oswy and Oswin.
651. Oswy alone.

670. Egfrid.
685. Aldfrid.
705. Osred.

716. Ceonred, son of Occa, son of Ida the Burner.
718. Osric, brother of Osred.
729. Ceolwulf, brother of Ceonred.

737. Eadbert, descended from Eadric, another son of Ida, and brother of Archbishop Egbert, the correspondent of Bede.

The names in capitals are the names of kings who reigned over Northumbria.
The dates placed after these names show the beginning and close of their reign.
The names in italics are those of queens and princesses.

For end of Vol. III.]

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